University of Alberta

Exploring Spirit at Work:

The Interconnectedness of Personality, Personal Actions, Organizational Features, and the Paths to Spirit at Work

By

Val Kinjerski ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Department of Human Ecology

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 2004

Library and
Archives Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 0-612-95954-6
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 0-612-95954-6

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing the Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou aturement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

Canada

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Fred and Joey

Who always believe in me

In Memory of

Mike Kinjerski, my Dad,

Who passed on before I started this journey.

He always inspired me to be true to myself

and to be the best I could be.

Acknowledgments

Several people have positively influenced my journey. I am grateful to the participants who shared their experience of spirit at work and to those individuals who guided and supported me through the process.

I particularly want to acknowledge the gift provided by the participants in this study. I feel privileged to have interviewed and shared in the lives of my 15 "spirited" participants. Your willingness to share your stories and insights about spirit at work was a highlight for me and will contribute to a richer understanding of spirit at work.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance and support I received from my examining committee, especially my co-advisors, Drs. Berna Skrypnek and Dianne Kieren. Berna, thank you for embracing my topic and your continued support. Your excitement about my work was heart warming and encouraging. As an advisor, you definitely went beyond the call of duty. Your enthusiasm never waned and I feel fortunate to have the benefit of your intelligence and analytical abilities. I am thankful for your wisdom in having me undertake both qualitative and quantitative research projects and for your guidance in developing the measure of spirit at work. Dianne, I have learned something from you through every interaction. You are very insightful and have a unique ability to get others to the important stuff. Sometimes I would spend days pondering your questions and comments, but it always resulted in increased clarity. Your positive and constructive feedback makes it very easy to hear and accept. Thank you for your endless willingness to read and comment on yet another draft.

I am grateful to Drs. Jose da Costa and Maryanne Doherty for participating on my supervisory committee. Joe, you will never know how much your positive attitude, encouragement, and support meant. You continually reminded me of the potential of my topic and, when times were tough, it was those comments that sustained me. Maryanne, you have a gentle spirit. I was struck by your fairness and sense of equality which was particularly evident as you chaired my Candidacy Exam.

Thank you to Drs. Tara Fenwick and Jerry Biberman. Tara, I appreciate your thoughtful analysis of my research and the sharing of your expertise and insights. I sense a kindred spirit. Jerry, thank you for being a pioneer in this important area and agreeing to participate as an external examiner.

Thank you to Linda Mirans for her quiet, "behind the scenes" support. Linda was always available to answer questions and to ensure that appropriate processes were followed and deadlines met.

I want to thank Melanie Moore for her wisdom and foresight to start a PhD support group. Supporting me along the way as I conducted the research, underwent endless hours of analysis, wrote the thesis, and prepared for the sharing of my research were Melanie Moore, Sherry Anne Chapman, and Rhonda Breitkreuz.

I also want to express my gratitude to my family. In particular, my husband, Fred, and son, Joey, never waned in their support and love, making the task of completing a PhD much easier.

Finally, I am very thankful for the financial support that I received for this project. This research was supported by a Province of Alberta Graduate Fellowship and a University of Alberta Dissertation Fellowship.

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Four Paths to Spirit at Work: How One Develops Spirit at Work 8
- Interest in Spirit at Work 9
- The Promotion of Spirit at Work 10
- A Definition of Individual Spirit at Work 12
- Four Perspectives on How One Develops Spirit at Work 14

Method 18
- Research Design 18
- Sample 19
- Ethical Considerations 20
- Data Collection 21
- Data Analysis 22

Findings 23
- Four Spirit at Work Stories 24
- Four Paths to Spirit at Work 26
  - The path of always there. 27
  - The path of coming together. 28
  - The path of transformative events. 31
  - The path of contextual sensitivity. 34
- The Relationship between Age and the Paths to Spirit at Work 36
- Defining Moments as a Window to Spirit at Work 37

Discussion 40

References 45

The Integrated Self: A Personality Profile of Individuals with High Spirit at Work 49
- The Concept of Individual-Centered Spirit at Work 50
- Paths to Individual Spirit at Work 51
- The Serendipity of Research 52

Method 53
- Research Design 53
- Sample 53
- Ethical Considerations 54
- Data Collection 55
- Data Analysis 56

Findings 57
- Inner Harmony 58
- Positive Energy 61
- Self-Transcendence 64
- Conscientiousness 69
- Openness to Possibilities 73
- Spiritual Inclination 79

Discussion 85
The Integrated Self: A Spirit at Work Personality Profile 85
The Integrated Personality Profile and Other Personality Theories 89
Conclusion 96
References 98
Appendix A: Comparison of Spirit at Work Facets with the FFM of Personality 101

Fostering Spirit at Work: A Shared Responsibility 103
Definitions of Spirit at Work 103
Organizational Spirit at Work 104
Individual-Centered Spirit at Work 104
The Changing Nature of Work 105
Organizational Response to Changing Nature of Work 107
Benefits of Spirit at Work 108
Characteristics of Workplace Spirituality that Foster Individual Spirit at Work.... 109
How One Comes to Experience Individual Spirit at Work 111
Method 113
Research Design 113
Participants 114
Ethical Considerations 115
Data Collection 115
Data Analysis 116
Findings 117
Personal Actions that Fostered Spirit at Work 118
Live Purposely and Consciously 118
Cultivate a Spiritual Life 123
Appreciate Self and Others 128
Refill the Cup 130
Organizational Characteristics that Fostered Spirit at Work 133
Inspiring Leadership 134
A Strong Organizational Foundation 136
Organizational Integrity 137
Positive Workplace Culture and Space 139
A Sense of Community among Members 140
Opportunities for Personal Fulfillment, Continuous Learning, and Development 141
Appreciation and Regard for Employees and their Contribution 143
The Power of Organizational Characteristics 145
Benefits of Spirit at Work 146
Increased Wellbeing 146
Enhanced Personal Relationships 147
Improved Customer Service 148
Increased Productivity 149
Discussion 150
References 159

General Discussion and Conclusion 162
An Ecological Model of Spirit at Work 162
  The Emergence of an Ecological Model of Spirit at Work 164
  Uniqueness of the Ecological Spirit at Work Model 165
  Key Concepts of the Model 165
    Underlying Assumptions 165
    Elements of the Model 167
      Conceptualization of spirit at work. 168
      Integrated personality 168
      Personal actions. 170
      Organizational factors. 171
      The paths to spirit at work. 173
      Benefits of spirit at work 175
  Confidence in the Spirit at Work Theory 175
Trustworthiness of Research 177
Implications for Theory and Practice 179
Looking Forward: Suggestions for Future Research 180
Personal Reflections 183
References 185
Appendix A 188
Trustworthiness Criteria 188

List of Figures

Figure 2-1 Four Paths to Spirit at Work 26

Figure 2-2 Always There Path 27

Figure 2-3 Coming Together Path 28

Figure 2-4 Transformative Events Path 31

Figure 2-5 Contextually Sensitive Path 34

Figure 3-1 Spirit at Work Personality Dimensions 58

Figure 3-2 Dimension of Inner Harmony 58

Figure 3-3 Dimension of Positive Energy 61

Figure 3-4 Dimension of Self Transcendence 64

Figure 3-5 Dimension of Conscientiousness 69

Figure 3-6 Dimension of Openness to Possibilities 73

Figure 3-7 Dimension of Spiritual Inclination 79

Figure 3-8 The Integrated Self Personality 88

Figure 4-1 Personal Factors that Foster Spirit at Work 118

Figure 4-2 Organizational Factors that Foster Spirit at Work 133

Figure 4-3 Benefits of Spirit at Work 146

Figure 4-4 Factors that Contribute to Spirit at Work 152

Figure 5-1 An Ecological Model of Spirit at Work 163

Introduction

> Good living and good working go together. Life and livelihood ought not to be separated but to flow from the same source, which is Spirit, for both life and livelihood are about Spirit. Spirit means life, and both life and livelihood are about living in depth, living with meaning, purpose, joy, and a sense of contributing to the greater community. A spirituality of work is about bringing life and livelihood back together again. And Spirit with them.
>
> Matthew Fox (1994, pp. 1-2)

To live with meaning, purpose, and joy and to make a contribution to society is fundamental to my wellbeing. Work has always provided me with an avenue to achieve this objective. To live an integrated life, where life and livelihood are not separate, but part of the whole, is one of my personal strivings. These aspirations seem to grow stronger as I age.

Coming to research spirit at work has been a journey. Working in the field of social work, I became concerned with the number of colleagues struggling with stress, burnout, or both. Social workers who were most committed to their work seemed to be at higher risk, thus, I explored burnout as a topic in my undergraduate studies. As my career moved into more senior roles and I was exposed to a broader view of work, I began to see the influence of organizational characteristics on employee wellbeing, thus questioned the role of the organization in employee stress and burnout. Organizational stress became the topic of study in my Master's degree.

At some point during this journey, I became conscious of my own spiritual path. The exploration of meaning, purpose, and things that mattered took precedence. Living a life that was aligned with that which I regarded as meaningful became a priority. Authenticity, that is, being myself in all aspects of my life, and integration of my complete self became essential. Finding meaning in work and making a contribution increased in importance.

It was about at this time, during my work as a senior manager and director in social services and later as a human service consultant, that I began to notice that while many people were experiencing stress at work, others described their work as meaningful, found ways to make a contribution, and continued to be passionate about what they were doing. These individuals saw their work as fulfilling a higher purpose and were able to make a difference in spite of challenging work conditions. I became curious about what was different for those who were stressed and those who saw beyond these conditions.

I called this seeing beyond the immediate work conditions "spirit at work" because there seemed to be an energy, a life-force that inspired or motivated these people towards others or a cause, in spite of challenges. This curiosity moved me enough to return to University to begin a PhD and to engage in research about spirit at work – what it is, how one comes to experience it, the factors that foster it, and how it might be measured.

While I found that spirit at work was increasingly gaining interest in both the corporate and academic worlds, research into the phenomenon had just begun and a universal definition of spirit at work had not yet been accepted. Moreover, definitions tended to be rather abstract and theoretical and did not lend themselves to empirical study. Believing that a comprehensive definition was an important first step to any research, I took the approach of developing a conceptual and operational definition of spirit at work.

Hence, I undertook a qualitative study with 14 professionals, who not only experienced spirit at work, but whose work also involved researching or promoting spirit at work. Although most participants had difficulty providing a comprehensive definition for spirit at work, they found it very easy to recall and describe such an experience. Thus, the definition that emerged from this research is grounded in their lived experience of spirit at work. These individuals reported a sense of alignment between their values and beliefs and their work, felt a strong sense of interconnectedness with others as well as a shared purpose, and found meaning in being engaged in work that has a higher purpose. In other work, I have developed and am currently validating a measure of spirit at work that was inspired by this definition. This preliminary research helped to differentiate between individual and organizational spirit at work and provided clarity about the experience of individual spirit at work, but did not provide insight into how it develops or might be fostered.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to contribute to the development of theory about how an individual develops spirit at work in a paid work context. In order to benefit from personal lived experience, a qualitative grounded approach was selected. Research questions included: How does one come to experience spirit at work? What factors foster individual spirit at work? What personal actions promote the experience of spirit at work? What contextual factors encourage the experience of spirit at work? What personal and organizational impacts do participants believe result from spirit at work?

This dissertation is presented in a multiple paper format consisting of three empirical papers: Four Paths to Spirit at Work: How One Develops Spirit at Work; The Integrated Self: A Personality Profile of Individuals with High Spirit at Work; and

Fostering Spirit at Work: A Shared Responsibility between the Individual and Organization. In the first paper, I address the main question of this study: How does one come to experience spirit at work? The subject for the second paper emerged unexpectedly from the data and includes a description of a personality profile of individuals with high spirit at work. I examine the personal and organizational factors that foster individual spirit at work and the accompanying benefits in the third paper. A more detailed discussion of each paper follows.

In the first paper, "Four Paths to Spirit at Work: How One Develops Spirit at Work," I address the main question posed in this research, that is, how does one come to experience spirit at work in a paid work context. The data indicated different ways to develop spirit at work. For some participants, the experience of spirit at work was "always there" – that was how they always experienced their work. The second group of individuals described their experience of spirit at work as a "coming together" of their values, beliefs, abilities, and life experience. For these individuals, spirit at work seemed to emerge during mid-life. The third group came to experience spirit at work as a response to a "transformative event." This event was viewed as a spiritual crisis, spiritual growth, or both and could occur at any age. Finally, the last group's experience of spirit at work was "contextually sensitive," that is, it was influenced by their contextual environment, thus, would come and go. I call these different ways to spirit at work paths because participants described spirit at work as a journey with defining moments along the way. These paths are compared with four emerging perspectives found in the literature about how one comes to experience spirit at work: spirit at work is innate, spirit at work comes about as part of one's spiritual quest, spirit at work develops as a result of the integration of a spiritual transformation; and spirit at work develops out of a positive work experience. Although it became apparent that not everyone developed spirit at work in the same way, spirit at work was experienced similarly by all participants.

The focus of the second paper, "The Integrated Self: A Personality Profile of Individuals with High Spirit at Work," is about the personality characteristics of participants. These findings emerged during the process of coding factors that fostered spirit at work and came as quite a surprise. In coding individual factors that fostered spirit at work, adjectives like intuitive, grateful, and self-transcendent were used to describe emergent themes. This suggested that it was not only what the participant did to foster spirit at work, but the inherent nature of the person also contributed to their experience. This led to the question: What is the personality profile of individuals with high spirit at work? A second analysis of data was completed and the transcripts were coded for personality characteristics. This second analysis revealed that participants with high spirit at work were well adjusted individuals, characterized by a sense of inner harmony, positive energy, conscientiousness, self-transcendence, an openness to possibilities, and a spiritual inclination. These characteristics are described in the second paper along with a discussion about how the personality profile of persons high on spirit at work compares with similar profiles associated with constructs found in the literature such as self-actualization, peak experience, flow, emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, and the five factor model of personality. Although participants shared a similar personality profile, it was evident that they did not develop spirit at work in the same way. Moreover, having a spirit at work profile did not guarantee a continuous spirit at work experience.

Individual and organizational factors that fostered participants' experience of spirit at work and the associated benefits are identified in the third paper, "Fostering Spirit at Work: A Shared Responsibility between the Individual and Organization." Unlike the individual characteristics found in the personality profile, this paper outlines the particular actions taken by individuals and the conditions of organizations that promote spirit at work. Analysis revealed that participants lived purposely and consciously; they cultivated a spiritual, value based life; they appreciated self and others; and they refilled their cup in ways that were meaningful to them. In addition, participants identified seven organizational features that promoted spirit at work including inspiring leadership; a strong foundation for the organization; organizational integrity; a positive workplace culture and space; a sense of community among members; opportunities for personal fulfillment, continuous learning, and development; and appreciation and regard for employees and their contribution. These factors are compared with factors included in the programs and practices of successful organizations as well as those identified in other studies as promoting spirit at work. In this paper, I argue that given the creation and nurturance of individual spirit at work is a shared responsibility between the individual and the organization, spirit at work develops as a combination of personality, individual behaviors, and organizational factors. Finally, the benefits of individual spirit at work as perceived by the participants are provided.

The purpose of a grounded theory study is to develop theory. The findings included in these three papers are integrated in the final concluding chapter where I propose and describe the elements of an ecological model of spirit at work. Although implications for theory and practice are addressed in each individual paper, I use this chapter to elucidate theoretical outcomes of the study and discuss overall implications for theory and practice. The dissertation concludes with a discussion of how this study as a whole contributes to the body of knowledge about spirit at work and offers suggestions for future research.

Reference

Fox, M. (1994). *The reinvention of work.* San Francisco: Harper.

Four Paths to Spirit at Work: How One Develops Spirit at Work

In hope of enhancing employee wellness and increasing productivity, spirit at work has become a topic of interest to employers, management consultants, and researchers. "Spirit at work" is a term that describes the experience of employees who find meaning and purpose in their work and who are passionate about and energized by their work. This experience is believed to result in positive outcomes for employees and employers. Some evidence exists suggesting a link between workplace spirituality and increased creativity, honesty, trust, and commitment in the workplace, along with an enhanced sense of personal fulfillment of employees (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002).

Spirit at work is being promoted by management consultants and some organizations as a source of wellness and increased productivity, but without a clear understanding of how one comes to have such an experience. For example, is the process the same for all individuals or does it differ? Is it inborn or can the experience be fostered? Although previous research has differentiated between individual and organizational spirit at work, the majority of research on this concept, thus far, has focused on organizational spirit at work. Organizational spirit at work generally refers to a positive workplace culture whereas individual spirit at work focuses on the positive feelings an individual has about their work. By exploring individual spirit at work and how one comes to develop it, further insights into how spirit at work can be nurtured may be obtained. Thus, the key objective of this study was to understand the process of how an individual comes to experience spirit at work.

Interest in Spirit at Work

The interest in spirit at work continues to grow in both academic and corporate sectors. There are many views to the sources of this interest. Viewing spirit at work as the integration of spirituality and work, some researchers suggest that the increased public interest in spirituality is in response to increasing levels of spiritual disorientation resulting from isolation, disconnection, and a lack or loss of meaning (Adams & Bezner, 2000; Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, & Saunders, 1988). Individuals' desire to experience spirituality (Lee & Zemke, 1993), along with increased curiosities about existential meaning (Reker, 2000) and Eastern philosophies (Brandt, 1996), has also led to increased exploration of spirituality. In particular, baby boomers have demonstrated a growing interest in contemplating life's meaning (Leigh, 1997) and how work contributes to that meaning. Finally, psychologists have shown a renewed interest in the "inner" development of the whole person as well as a more precise conceptualization and definition of existential meaning (O'Connor & Chamberlain, 2000; Reker, 2000; Reker & Wong, 1988), making spirit at work easier to study.

Concurrent with this increased interest in spirituality, employees are questioning the relationship between spirituality and their work (Neal, Lichtenstein, & Banner, 1999) and are looking to find increased meaning in their work that is beyond financial rewards (Fairholm, 1997; Leigh, 1997; Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Many employees are demoralized and have experienced spiritual disorientation as a result of the downsizing, reengineering, and layoffs that occurred in the last two decades (Lee & Zemke, 1993; Leigh, 1997). The nature and condition of work has changed, further altering the relationship between employers and employees (Duxbury & Higgins; HRDC, 1997). For example, globalization, a shift to knowledge-based organizations, and growing employee demand for meaningful work and environments that nurture creativity and personal growth have placed additional demands on organizations to be more responsive to employees (Caudron, 1997; Leigh, 1997; Lowe, 2000).

Whereas employees are seeking work that is inspiring and meaningful (Fairholm, 1997; Leigh, 1997; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Moxley, 2000), corporations are looking for alternative ways to increase productivity and to gain the competitive edge (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Leigh, 1997). Facing the reality that downsizing and re-engineering did not accomplish what work organizations had hoped for, they are searching for ways to attract and retain competent staff, to enhance employee creativity, and to increase employee satisfaction and achieve economic benefits of these efforts.

The Promotion of Spirit at Work

Among the new approaches to increase productivity and to increase workers' meaningful experience of work is the promotion of spirit at work. The assumption is that such experiences will foster more fulfilling lives for employees and positive outcomes for organizations (Fairholm, 1997; Milliman, Ferguson, Trickett, & Condemi, 1999; Moxley, 2000). Originating in business, most research on spirit at work has focused on the organization as the unit of analysis, and in particular, those factors that foster changes in an organization that result in the organization being more "spiritual." For example, Mitroff and Denton's (1999) research indicated five ways organizations could be religious or spiritual: (a) organizations that are religious based, for example, Mormon-run businesses; (b) evolutionary organizations, like the YMCA, which were originally associated with a specific religion, but evolved, over time, to a more ecumenical position;

(c) recovering organizations which adopted the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous as a means to foster spirituality; (d) socially responsible organizations whereby the business is guided by strong spiritual principles for the benefit of society; and (e) values-based organizations which are guided by general philosophical principles or values which are not spiritual or religious based.

Although one might debate whether an organization can be spiritual, "organizational spirit at work" is generally used to refer to a combination of an organizational vision and values that reflects the higher good, a positive organizational climate, including a "spiritual" leadership style, and a sense of community and common purpose among employees (Gibbons, 1999; Guillory, 2000; Izzo & Klein, 1998; Mitroff & Denton, 1999). As such, attention by researchers has been given to determining the appropriateness of integrating spirituality into the management of an organization (Mitroff & Denton, 1999), discovering how one might integrate spiritual values into organizations (Milliman et al., 1999), and assessing the relationship between spirituality and leadership (Cavanagh, 1999; Jacobson, 1994; Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, & Kakabadse, 2002; Neck & Milliman, 1994; Paulison, 2001). The nature of management strategies (Leigh, 1997) and organizational cultures that foster spirit at work (Izzo & Klein, 1998) have also been explored. Scholars have examined the role of spirituality in learning organizations (Howard, 2002; Porth, McCall, & Bausch, 1999) and organizational transformation (Dehler & Welsh, 1994), how organizational spirituality can be maintained (Konz & Ryan, 1999), and the different ways organizations can incorporate religious or spiritual values (Mitroff & Denton, 1999).

Surveys of leaders and mid-level managers confirm the need for workplace cultures, leadership, and work processes (organizational spirit at work) that acknowledges the whole individual with needs, desires, values and a spirit self (individual spirit at work) (Fairholm, 1997; Jacobson, 1994; Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Although this relationship between organizational and individual spirit at work is supported, little is known about how individuals come to experience spirit at work. How is spirit at work developed and fostered in individuals' lives?

Given the minimal attention given to researching spirit at work with the individual as the unit of analysis, a significant gap is evident in the understanding of spirit at work as a process, that is, how it develops. Without a clear understanding about how one comes to experience spirit at work at the individual level and a means of measuring levels of individual spirit at work, it is difficult to know if the interventions adopted by organizations have achieved the desired outcomes.

A Definition of Individual Spirit at Work

After reviewing the literature, I responded to the gap in understanding of spirit at work by first undertaking a qualitative study to define spirit at work. I asked 14 professionals, who not only experienced spirit at work, but whose work also involved researching or promoting spirit at work, to define spirit at work and then to describe a personal experience of spirit at work. Although most participants had difficulty providing a comprehensive definition for spirit at work, they found it very easy to recall and describe such an experience. Even though I was not specifically asking about individual spirit at work, the definition that everyone gave me as well as the experience they described was at the individual level. These rich descriptions of their personal experiences of spirit at work revealed much consistency in experiences among individuals.

At the individual level, spirit at work was a distinct, multidimensional experience characterized by physical, affective, cognitive, interpersonal, spiritual, and mystical components. This research revealed that spirit at work generally includes a *physical* sensation exemplified by a positive state of arousal or energy. Positive *affect* was characterized by a profound feeling of well-being and joy. *Cognitive* features involved a sense of being authentic, a belief that one is engaged in meaningful work that has a higher purpose, and an awareness of alignment among one's values, beliefs, and one's work. The *interpersonal* dimension of spirit at work was depicted by a sense of connection to others and common purpose. A *spiritual* presence was characterized by a sense of connection to something larger than self, such as a higher power, the Universe, nature, or humanity. Finally, a *mystical* dimension was portrayed by a sense of perfection, transcendence, living in the moment, and experiences that were awe-inspiring, sacred, or mysterious (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004a). A more detailed description of this study has been documented in a separate report (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004a).

Grounded in the actual experiences of individuals with spirit at work, this research derived definition served as a starting point for determining what spirit at work is and is not and how it is differentiated from related constructs such as flow and peak experiences. In particular, it revealed how individuals describe their experience of spirit at work, furthering distinguishing between individual and organizational spirit at work. A clearer understanding of individual descriptions of spirit at work sets the stage for examining how it develops, how it is maintained and nurtured, and what factors, including organizational features, may cultivate the experience. Such a definition can also facilitate the examination of how individual spirit at work impacts personal and organizational outcomes. Finally, the definition obtained in this initial study has led to the development of a measure of spirit at work which is presently being used and tested (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004b). Methodological research such as this is needed to achieve the development of valid and reliable measures of individual spirit at work.

Four Perspectives on How One Develops Spirit at Work

Although participants in the previously reported study described spirit at work as a personal experience (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004a), how one develops spirit at work was not explored. There are many hypotheses about such a question. Based on a review of the literature, I have conceptualized four different perspectives about how one comes to develop spirit at work.

Spirit at work is innate. One perspective is that spirit at work is innate. If this is so, it could be argued as Emmons (1999) does that like intellectual or emotional intelligence, individuals also have a degree of spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence, as proposed by Emmons (1999, 2000), focuses on the ability or propensity to experience spirituality. Perhaps individuals also have an ability or propensity to experience spirit at work.

Spirit at work develops as part of one's spiritual quest. Another perspective is that individuals develop spirit at work by developing and enhancing their spirituality (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). Of interest to spirit at work is the search for meaning through one's work, a focus on serving others, and interconnectedness with self, others and the universe (Mitroff & Denton, 1999), all elements of spirituality. Because this spiritual quest often coincides with mid-life, spirit at work has been described, partially, as a mid-life phenomenon (Brandt, 1996). Moreover, Erikson's (1959, 1997) theory of personality development points to mid-life as a time of generativity, a time when making a contribution towards others and leaving a legacy becomes important.

Based on their review of the literature, Tischler, Biberman, and McKeage (2002) concluded that spirituality positively impacts physiological and psychological health as well as improves work success, in particular, productivity. This conclusion, that one's spirituality has an influence on well-being and productivity, is supported by Piedmont's (2001) finding that the spiritual transcendence is significantly related to well-being, life satisfaction, and health. Moreover, the hypothesis that spirituality can be developed or enhanced in individuals (Piedmont, 2001) lends support to the idea that spirit at work can also be cultivated, perhaps through developing one's spirituality.

Spirit at work develops through the integration of a spiritual transformation. A related, but different view is that individual spiritual transformations are integrated into one's work and one's relationship with their work, thus leading to the experience of spirit at work (Mendoza, 1998; Neal et al., 1999). Typically, these spiritual transformations are acute and caused by spiritual crises such as a divorce or job loss, a profound spiritual experience such as the result of a near-death experience, or personal epiphany experiences that occur while in a sacred place or being in nature (Neal et al.). With respect to one's work, Neal and colleagues have shown that spiritual transformations follows three steps: the dark night of the soul, a search for new core spiritual principles, and integration of those principles in one's life, including work (Neal et al.). The dark night of the soul is generally used to refer to a lengthy and profound absence of hope.

Those things that previously provided meaning no longer have the same effect. This leads to a spiritual search for new meaning and hope in one's work. A spiritual integration and transformation occurs when one is able to apply these new principles to key aspects of life, including work, thus regaining hope and meaning.

Whether this process of spiritual integration occurs within or outside the work context, it leads most people to change their relationship with work. For example, Neal and colleagues report that this change in relationship can occur within the existing work environment by finding new meaning in work, a deepening of the relationships at work, or through a renewed commitment to performance through service. Thus, it follows that individuals may come to experience spirit at work through a personal spiritual transformation. Unlike spiritual development or growth that seems to evolve gradually over time, a spiritual transformation is unexpected, acute and immediate.

Spirit at work develops out of a positive work experience. A fourth viewpoint is that individuals come to experience spirit at work as a result of positive characteristics of the work environment. The research emphasis on organizational spirit at work and the findings regarding corporate culture, and leadership in particular, which were discussed earlier, lend support for this school of thought. For example, findings suggest that a shared vision and values, teamwork, empowerment and involvement in decision making, and alignment between human resource practices and organizational values can enhance employee spiritual and work habits, thus one's experience of spirit at work (Milliman, et al., 1999; Neck & Milliman, 1994). Reports of businesses and corporations, that successfully combined the values of social responsibility or integrated spirituality and meaningful work with the goal of profit, like the Body Shop, Ben and Jerry's, and Xerox, suggest that certain organizational characteristics may indeed foster the experience of individual spirit at work.

The notion that there may be more than one path to spirit at work is supported by these four viewpoints and leads to several research questions. For example: Is spirit at work innate? Is the experience of spirit at work developmental and dependent on one's spiritual development? Can one come to experience spirit at work through a significant spiritual transformation? Finally, does the experience depend on one's work environment?

These perspectives guided this research in a variety of ways, including the selection of participants, the development of interview questions, the formation of analysis categories, and the interpretation of data. For example, the view of spirit at work as part of a spiritual quest and a mid-life phenomenon pointed to baby-boomers and people in mid-life as the most likely to experience spirit at work. Several of the perspectives pointed to the role that spirituality, spiritual intelligence, or spiritual transformation may have in the development of spirit at work, directing the inclusion of participants with varied religious and spiritual beliefs, and the exploration, in the interviews, of the perceived influence spirituality had on participants' experience of spirit at work. This variation in respondents included people who have experienced spirit at work and who were psychologically and spiritually healthy, of different ages across the life span, and with varied spiritual beliefs.

Previous research (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004a) has provided a comprehensive definition of spirit at work and distinguished between individual and organizational spirit at work. Conceptualization of these various perspectives about the process of developing spirit at work leads me to predict that individuals may come to experience spirit at work in a variety of ways. However, an understanding of the particular ways individuals come to experience spirit at work still needs to be explored. For example, do individuals follow a unique path or different avenues, what factors enhance or impede spirit at work, and does the experience of spirit at work positively impact wellbeing and productivity as proclaimed by many organizational consultants? Thus, the purpose of this study was to contribute to the development of theory about how individuals, in paid work contexts, develop spirit at work.

Method

Research Design

Spirit at work is relatively new and still in the exploratory stage, therefore, the use of qualitative methods to study the phenomenon was seen as most appropriate. The process of how individuals come to experience spirit at work requires the exploration of deeper perspectives involving thoughts, feelings, and beliefs that are best captured through in-depth, face-to-face discussions.

As my intent was to contribute to the development of theory about how spirit at work develops, grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2000) was selected. Grounded theory is a qualitative methodology which derives its name from the practice of generating theory from research which is "grounded" in data based on real life experiences (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). I chose grounded theory because, as a method, it goes beyond description and even the generation of theory to grounding that theory in data that are systematically gathered, analyzed, and interpreted through the research process. Strauss and Corbin (1998) argue that theory derived from data is more likely to resemble reality than theory that is derived from concepts based on experience or through speculation because it is based on the standpoint of those who live it. Grounded theory is particularly useful in areas lacking previous theoretical development and offers a means of exploring issues when data are not readily quantified (Corbin, 1986). Suited to questions about process, grounded theory fit well with this study about how individuals develop spirit at work.

Sample

Purposive sampling was used to identify individuals with varying characteristics who reported high levels of spirit at work. A sample was sought reflecting variation in gender, age, education, socioeconomic status, and occupation. Although baby-boomers and those at mid-life (those between 40 and 60 years) were over sampled, participants across the life span were interviewed. Potential research participants were either known to the researcher, identified based on referrals, or identified from published stories in local newspapers about positive work experiences. Of this group, 15 individuals were interviewed, but only individuals with self-identified high levels of spirit at work who were in paid full-time employment were included in the data analysis. Of the two individuals interviewed but not included in the data analysis, one person was working part-time and the second person received his income from a source other than his job.

The respondents (10 females and 3 males) included in the analysis ranged in age from 26 to 81 years. Twelve participants were Caucasian, one person was Aboriginal. The vast majority of participants were married or living common-law (n=10), three were widowed or divorced. Their highest level of education included a high school diploma (n=2), apprenticeship or special training (n=3), a 2-year diploma (n=2), an undergraduate degree (n=2), or a graduate or professional degree (n=4).

Six participants were self-employed, and seven were employees working in organizations ranging from small businesses and not-for-profit agencies to large bureaucracies. Occupations represented included: administrative assistant, dentist, educator, hairdresser, landscape designer, medical doctor, organizational consultant, parking attendant, physiotherapist, police officer, professor, real estate agent, and receptionist. All participants worked full-time, working from 30 to 80 hours per week. Participants reported a range of income. Six participants reported incomes between $25,000 and $50,000, three reported incomes from $50,000 to $100,000, and four reported incomes over $100,000.

Ethical Considerations

This study received approval from the Human Ethics Review Board in the Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry, and Human Ecology at the University of Alberta. Complying with the guidelines, participants were informed about the nature of the study prior to and again in the first interview before agreeing to participate and giving written consent to use their data. Participants were aware that their involvement was voluntary, that they could decide to withdraw at any time, and that they could decide against having their story included in the study. None of the participants exercised this option. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. Participants were immediately given pseudonyms and all identifying information was removed from the transcripts. Audio-tapes are stored separately from the consents and will be erased upon completion of my degree.

Data Collection

Data were collected through in-depth face-to-face interviews lasting from one and one-half to two hours. Each of the 13 participants was interviewed once. In order to clarify interpretation of data, some participants were contacted a second time, by phone or informally through face-to-face contact. Interviews were conducted in environments that were most convenient and comfortable for the participants, generally in their home or office. I audio-recorded and transcribed all the interviews. Demographic information was collected in the beginning of the interview. I made hand-written notes of key points which I explored further with the participant during the interview. As soon after the interview as possible, I recorded a memo outlining my reactions and thoughts about the interview and data.

Although a focused interview guide was initially piloted and used, the interview framework evolved over time based on participants' response, my learning from each previous interview, and the particular stage of the study. For example, once themes began to emerge, subsequent interviews were used to validate the emerging categories and participants were asked to identify or confirm their particular path. Upon completion of analysis, the participants in the initial interviews were contacted again in order to confirm their path. All participants agreed with the identified path.

In each interview, participants were asked to describe their experience of work and to rate themselves on a spirit at work scale. Then they were asked to tell a story about a time that they experienced spirit at work, a time that they felt like they made the right career choice, felt good about their work, and felt most alive, involved and excited about their work. This was followed by an exploration of the personal actions and external factors that fostered and impeded their experience of spirit at work. The interview then moved to an exploration of the individual's experience of work over time, with a focus on when the experience was strongest, was not present, and the reasons for the change. This was followed by a question about the perceived benefits of spirit at work and potential downsides. Finally, participants were asked to identify three factors that would enhance their spirit at work and what advice they would share with others interested in promoting spirit at work.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was informed by a grounded theory perspective (Charmaz, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1994, 1998) that focuses on individuals' lived experiences and stories. Grounded in data, this inductive method is used to develop theory which evolves through simultaneous and systematic collection and analysis of that data (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Grounded theory recognizes that data collection and analysis occurs through interaction between the participants and researcher (Charmaz, 2000), therefore, the discovered reality is also a result of the interaction between the viewer and the viewed.

In accordance with the emergent nature of grounded theory methods, data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously. Analytical steps included: (a) reading of the interviews to get an overview of the responses, (b) open coding of interviews, (c) grouping of initial codes that appeared frequently into themes, (d) building of analytical categories and frameworks from themes, and (e) making comparisons and linking categories into a coherent framework.

Several strategies were incorporated to establish trustworthiness. Memo writing, which involves making a written record of analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), was used to assist the transformation from working with data to concepts and to continually reflect on the research process and data analysis. The coding frame, based on emergent themes, was continually reviewed with a senior researcher. These themes were reworked until agreement between the two researchers was achieved and all coded data fit the categories. Ongoing member checking throughout the interview as well as verification of the developing theory with subsequent participants strengthened the confirmability of the study.

Findings

Participants' descriptions of their experiences of spirit at work had characteristics similar to the definition of individual spirit at work arrived at in an initial study (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004) and described earlier. For example, participants reported profound feelings of wellbeing ("it was overwhelmingly positive"; "basking in the satisfaction of a job well done"), a belief that their work made a contribution ("we make such a difference to people"), a sense of connection to others and common purpose ("it is a shared experience"), an awareness of a connection to something larger than self ("we are conduits"; "it was like this other energy was working through [me]," and a sense of perfection and transcendence ("see the poetry in the everyday").

Analysis revealed four distinct paths to spirit at work which I described as: always there, coming together, transformative event, and contextually sensitive. Some participants reported always having the experience of spirit at work. The largest group of participants described spirit at work as a coming together of their beliefs, values, and life experience. For some, the experience of spirit at work occurred as a result of a transformative event. And, for others, the path was contextually sensitive; therefore, the experience of spirit at work would come and go, depending on the context of the work environment. A description of similarities and differences among each of these paths follows. The relationship between age and defining moments on the experience of spirit at work is also described.

Four Spirit at Work Stories

Four brief stories illustrating the four paths to spirit at work – always there, coming together, a transformative event, and contextually sensitive – are offered.

Always there. The *always there* path has a continuous character. Spirit at work had always been there for Larry. He believed that to some degree, "you either have it or you don't." Alluding perhaps to a type of capacity, he said, "I think you have to come into the world half-cocked." Larry recalled always being a people person, helping out, caring for others, and being dedicated to what he did. That was how he grew up; what his family did. He reported that, for him, the experience of spirit at work had been constant, "with peaks along the way, but never valleys." When asked how he developed spirit at work, he made reference to the "gifts [he'd] been given," asserting that, "It's in me."

Coming together. The *coming together* path resembles a growing and integrative path. Noreen described her experience of spirit at work as one of "coming together." Although she felt that it was possible to experience spirit at work at a younger age and referred to those experiences as "fleeting moments," she believed that spirit at work was not recognized until later in life. She reported that it was only when she had experiences in several areas of her life that she was able to make the connections and that she was able to experience spirit at work. Noreen described spirit at work as a time when her skills, faith, and passion came together and she felt "at home." Not only was there a match between her passion, gifts, and work, she recognized that a transformation occurred. Her experience of spirit at work seemed to be the integration of all that she found to have meaning. She claimed that all that she had experienced before, for example, as a mother, wife, and teacher, had prepared her for the experience of spirit at work. For Noreen, spirit at work seemed related to mid-life, "a time when you are putting everything together."

Transformative. The path to spirit at work through *transformative events* was either as a result of an experience of spiritual awakening or spiritual crisis. Although Ben spoke about how his experience of work had changed over time, particularly because of his increasing skill level which resulted in consistent improvement, the transformation came when he took an acupuncture course. He described the impact of that course and learning about holistic medicine as the biggest single change or transition point, not only for his work, but also for his life. He referred to the impact of the training as "life transforming" and claimed that "it changed everything."

Contextually sensitive. This path is a path most dependent on the work environment. As the environment changed, the path changed. Shelia loved her work and the contribution she was making, but, over time, her experience of spirit at work seemed to depend on the environment in which she was working. Although she generally experienced spirit at work, she described two instances where she did not. Of particular interest was her spirit at work during a job that she held over several years. Shelia described experiencing spirit at work during the first half of her time with the organization. Then she described how her work environment changed and negatively affected her experience of work. Her workload increased, a co-worker did not carry her load nor was she as committed as Shelia, a new leader was unable to resolve the issues, and she experienced less support resulting in stress and, eventually, a negative attitude. She ultimately left and took up a similar position in another department where she now feels included, supported, respected, and recognized for her contribution. She described herself as again being "committed to doing well in the job" and wanting "to see it succeed."

Four Paths to Spirit at Work

The following section reports the data for all participants for these paths. Figure 2-1 provides a visual picture of all four separate paths.

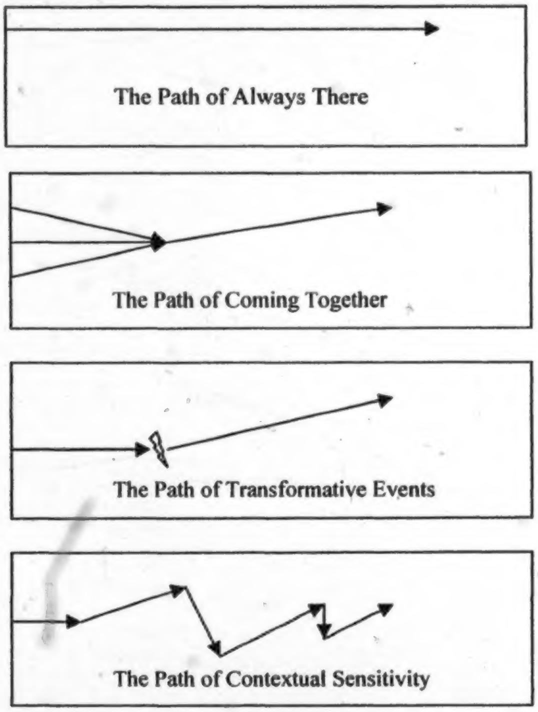
The Path of Always There
The Path of Coming Together
The Path of Transformative Events
The Path of Contextual Sensitivity

Figure 2-1. Four Paths to Spirit at Work

The path of always there.

Figure 2-2. Always There Path

Many participants who had experienced spirit at work reported they had always experienced work in this way. So when asked how they developed it, the majority of participants did not have an answer. Reflecting the view of many in this category, Ken, who was a parking attendant, said, "I don't know if you develop it. I think you have it or you don't." Kelly was the only participant in this group who felt that everyone was born with spirit, and therefore had the capacity for spirit at work, it was a matter of "whether we develop it or use it."

Those participants who experienced spirit at work as *always there* recalled being people persons, regularly helping others out. For example, Larry recalled helping others at a young age:

> I have always been a people person. . . . I was always into helping people . . . I grew up with both sets of grandparents until I was probably 18 years and they both lived in my home town. I always cared for them, was visiting them, driving them places, doing things. We also lived on a street leading to the seniors lodge, so there were many times that we would pick an old person up who stumbled or who was carrying groceries and had fallen – you just did it. . . . Actually, the whole family was just really involved with people. We just cared about people and for people. We did things for people on request and we did things for people just because we wanted to do it. (Dentist)

The experience of spirit at work for this group of individuals was constant, cutting across a range of jobs. For example, participants on this path included a receptionist, organizational consultant, dentist, and parking attendant. Molly, who was a receptionist, said, ". . . I think, no matter where I worked . . . I loved it." Ken could not remember a time when spirit at work was not present for him. Kelly claimed, "It has been a constant. . . . I have always felt connected."

Although the experience was constant, the intensity of the experience varied across the participants and even for the same participants over time. For example, Kelly, an organizational consultant, reported an awareness of being "more fully conscious of [her] connection all the time" and that, as a result, the experience of spirit at work is now deeper. On the other hand, Larry described his experience as remaining the same:

> My love for it and desire for it hasn't waned in 31 years. I have *never, never* in 31 years woken up and said: Oh, God it is Monday morning. It is more like (*snaps fingers*) Monday morning, here we go; we've got another week ahead of us. And, I don't know what does it; I really don't know what does it, but it's in me. (Dentist)

Participants, who experienced spirit at work as *always there*, had little to say about how they got there. They claimed that it has just always been so. They recalled having a tendency towards helping others and an awareness of this connection at a young age. Generally speaking, for these individuals, the experience grew and deepened over time.

The path of coming together.

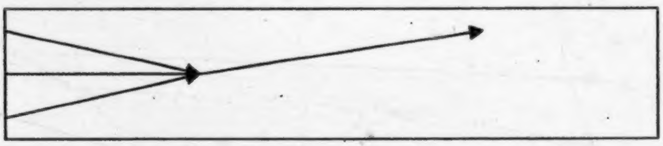

Figure 2-3. Coming Together Path

The largest group experienced spirit at work as a "coming together." Unlike those participants who experienced spirit at work as a constant, participants in the *coming together* group believed that spirit at work was something that developed over time, something that they "constantly worked on." These individuals reported that they only experienced spirit at work when their abilities, experience, and passion came together to a point of "feeling at home." At that point, they described a match between their passion, gifts, and their work and reported that a transformation occurred. For example, at the point that Noreen felt she experienced spirit at work, she described being:

> . . . in a rare position where my skills that I have been developing as a teacher, my faith . . . and my passion has all come together in this position. I feel more at home, I think, than I have felt in a long time. . . . Things have come together at this point for this to happen. . . . What I have learned along the way . . . I think has prepared me for what I am doing now and I wouldn't be ready to do what I am doing had I not had the experiences within the school [as a teacher], as a mom, as a wife, so I think that it is a coming together of all my experiences. . . . What I am doing right now is this match between my passion and my gifts and my faith – all of these parts coming together . . . there is transformation. (Educator)

For some participants, this "coming together" was less than smooth. For example, Maureen described her life as a "roller coaster ride." She moved back and forth between careers in music and hair dressing, she was in and out of relationships, she moved back to her country of origin, and then, when she came back to Canada, she worked for two hair salons that went bankrupt. She described her experience as:

> I was just trying on all of these hats. I always knew that I loved styling hair and music, but there was always the other stuff around that kind of got in the way, you know, the friends you hung out with, the things you did. All that stuff, I think got in the way. . . . I don't think I knew myself. . . . I didn't know what I was about, which direction I needed to go in and I think a lot of it – that is just a youthful thing, you kind of do what your friends do. . . . I wasn't happy with who I was, working in the wrong places. It was just trying to discover, the self-discovery thing, so I had to work my way out of that before I could get to that place. (Hairdresser)

Participants in the *coming together* group advised that, for them, the experience of spirit at work was incremental, developing over time. This view was illustrated by Donna's comment that, "It gets better with time. . . . It gets richer with every significant event . . . [and] with age." Karla also reported being conscious of her own growth over time, particularly building and drawing on past experiences:

> It seems that things have built on each other and although I have left behind certain experiences . . . I have also been very aware that I have pulled a lot forward with me. So part of that is age and the building of those experiences and now being able to play in the arena that does draw on all of that experience. (Landscape Designer)

Spirit at work was considered by participants in this category as a mid-life phenomenon. For example, Rowena reported that although she led a spiritual life and her faith significantly influenced how she lived and worked, it was not until mid-life that she experienced spirit at work. She indicated that now that she is older, she asks different questions and is more:

> . . . interested in what legacy we are going to leave for those coming after us. . . . If I can feel like when I die some day that I helped, in some marginal way, to increase that part that is on the good side (*voice fills with emotion*), I will feel like I have participated in the will of God and the will of good and the will of spirit. (Professor)

Rowena reported that she started asking those questions when she "began to see that level of spirit and the recognition of it makes a huge difference in the work outcomes" and that realization came as a result of her own experience of spirit at work. Noreen supported the idea of spirit at work as a mid-life experience and saw it as a time of putting everything together. As did Maureen:

> I feel really complete. I was just a late bloomer, I guess. . . . I have come to a place where I know how I want to do things, how I want it to be done. . . . It was like my life had begun at a very late age. . . . I finally felt like a grown up. . . . I think I am just happy with who I am now. (Hairdresser)

Further supporting the view of spirit at work as a mid-life phenomenon, Donna suggested that as she and her medical practice ages, she is more reflective, resulting in an increase in the richness of experience.

Those individuals who experienced spirit at work as a *coming together* seemed to get a taste of it along the way. Noreen suggested that she had "fleeting moments" that kept her going whereas Maureen recalled the times where everything went well and she "clicked with clients" that kept her in the field for 26 years.

These participants viewed spirit at work as a journey, as expressed by Karla, "and along that journey, knowing that some things do need to be let go, modified, changed. Other things, you get to keep, mould them a little differently, but then see that you can use them." Like other paths, the coming together path was personalized by participant's individual journey. This concept of a journey was further reflected in how participants in this category rated themselves on the spirit at work scale. They seemed to be hesitant to rate themselves too high because, as one participant suggested, they "still see a larger coming together in the future." For example, on a scale of one to ten, Donna assigned herself a rating of seven to eight because, "I just don't know what is out there. I know where I have been, but I am assuming that there is a lot more."

Individuals on the *coming together* path described spirit at work as incremental and developing over time. Spirit at work culminated when their life experiences, skills, and passions came together and they lived in alignment with that which mattered. At that point, they felt whole and integrated as opposed to segmented.

The path of transformative events.

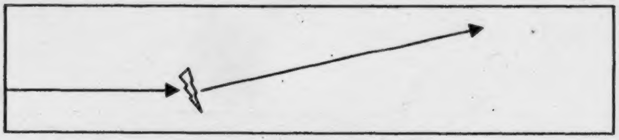

Figure 2-4. Transformative Events Path

The third path to spirit at work occurred as a result of a "transformative event." Analysis revealed that the path of *transformative events* occurred in response to a crisis, as Rose's experience demonstrates, or a spiritual awakening, as illustrated by Ben's story.

Rose began a career in real estate when she was in her late 30s. At that point, she would have rated her experience of spirit at work at a two or three because she was using work as an excuse to get away from social obligations. She advised that she did not mind doing the work and that she even enjoyed it, but not the same way she currently does. Rose reported that the turning point for her was when her husband died. Because of a glitch in paperwork, in addition to a large hospitalization bill, she was not eligible for any benefits to raise the family. She recalled the experience as:

> It was absolutely devastating, it was. That is when I thought I had better get busy with real estate and that is when I started working much harder than I probably would have normally worked. . . . But when Mike died, I wanted to give the boys a good life and send them to University. I really got into it and it became my whole life. . . . The more I worked, the more I liked it. (Real Estate Agent)

Rose invested herself in her work because she had to earn a living in order to raise her family, not because it was her passion. Initially, meaning came from providing for her children, but she said that it "gets to be that you love it. . . . I love everything about it." She now sees her work as a "very good service that I can give to people." Rose currently rates herself as a ten on the spirit at work scale and refers to real estate as "what makes me tick. . . . It just became my whole life." Although she reported always enjoying her work, she suggested that if she had not had the experience of being widowed, her situation would have been different and that she might have put that energy into social events instead.

Whereas Rose's transformative path to spirit at work seemed to be as a result of a spiritual crisis, Ben described his transformative path as one of spiritual awakening. Although it appeared that he may have been on a *coming together* path, it changed to a *transformative* path once he took an acupressure course:

> Once I realized that I had the resources to make a difference, it had been a consistent improvement. But the biggest thing during that timeframe, where things had gone well, is when I took the acupressure course. That opened up a huge landscape of things to draw from and developed the entire philosophy of how I go about things. It completed things much, much more than they had been prior to that. That was probably the biggest single change. (Physiotherapist)

He referred to the time as a transition point that was life transforming and got carried into every single relationship or conversation that he had at and outside of work. The effect seemed to be so great, that without it, Ben wondered if he would have remained in his profession:

> I would call it a transition point. A big change from how I began to look at people. If that hadn't happened, I don't know that I would feel this way right now. I don't know that I would even be working in this same profession. It was that big of a transition that I don't know that I would actually be doing what I am doing, at least prior to that, the same kind of work. . . . It changed everything. (Physiotherapist)

Like participants on the *coming together* path, individuals on the *transformative* path had moments that helped them to remain in their career. In fact, Rose and Ben initially appeared to be on a coming together path; however, it was only when they underwent a significant event that transformed their lives and their experience of work that they actually experienced spirit at work. Even after the event that led to the experience of spirit at work, they reported that their spirit at work grew and became deeper.

The path of contextual sensitivity.

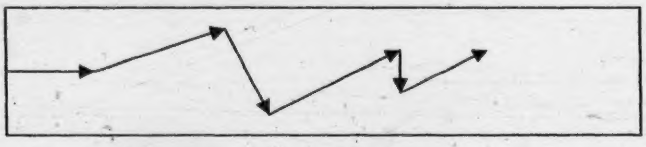

Figure 2-5. Contextually Sensitive Path

The path of *contextual sensitivity* was clearly different from the paths previously outlined. This path was influenced greatly by the participants' work environments, thus the experience of spirit at work would come and go. When it would go, however, participants reported working very hard to get it back.

Even though Shelia, who was an administrative assistant, described herself as having very high spirit and gave herself a 10 on the spirit at work scale, she spoke of at least two periods where she lost her spirit at work and had to change jobs before regaining it back. She described herself as "having had it in [another position], lost it, moved; I've got it back again, and I've got it back even more so right now." She reported that the difference between the two positions mostly had to do with leadership and a sense of team. In describing her current work situation, she said:

> They do not view me as a secretary or a receptionist or those kinds of things. They actually see me as being an expert in my field. . . . [They] respect the . . . expertise that I do bring. (Administrative Assistant)

Like Shelia, Sandra also gave herself a 10 on the spirit at work scale, until she had a brush with death during her work. That changed everything, including her rating. Even though she still experiences those 10s on a regular basis, she now gives herself an average of 8. She described the change:

> Obviously, in the beginning, I was gung-ho and ready to go – which I still am. I never changed how happy I am to be at work or my ethic or anything, but obviously I had a *real bad* experience . . . and I felt I couldn't do the job anymore

> and wasn't going to do it because of the scared factor and all of those things. So [I] really went down and sort of stayed ho-hum for a couple of months because I just tried to do my work and I tried to avoid every situation possible that I put myself in [which] is not a real good thing when you are a police officer. So that was kind of tricky, but now I am back up to how I was before. (Police Officer)

The negative experience significantly changed how she went about her work and consequently, her experience of spirit at work. Rather than serving others, she found that, out of fear, she was focusing on her own safety. Recognizing the difference, Sandra reported pulling herself out of that state and regaining her sense of spirit at work:

> I was feeling good about helping people, but I wasn't really getting to experience it that much because I was so concerned about myself and I was so concerned about avoiding going to situations. . . . Obviously I didn't like it, so I switched out of it. (Police Officer)

Similar to Sandra, Shelia talked about her role in developing spirit at work. She reported that she worked at it and did not give up "because you really want to see it succeed." Shelia felt a "sense of responsibility and commitment to make the team work." She was committed to her work. Suggesting that "it's kind of a family environment" and that "it's not just all about work," she advised that she also instigated, created fun, and joked. She loved her work, but that was not enough to keep her on the *always there* path. In addition to her personal efforts, the work environment played a critical role in fostering her experience of spirit at work:

> So I think that I just have a positive nature, and if you're well-suited to the job, and you're allowed to flourish with that – if that nature is allowed out and not stifled, you have a very happy environment. If you stifle that kind of personality, you have a very unhappy person and you won't last. (Administrative Assistant)

The analysis revealed four distinct paths to spirit at work: *always there, coming together, a transformative event,* and *contextually sensitive*. Although participants did not develop spirit at work in the same way, their experience of spirit at work was similar.

What varied was the age at which participants on the different paths experienced spirit at work.

The Relationship between Age and the Paths to Spirit at Work

Spirit at work was experienced by participants with a wide variation in age, suggesting that it can occur at any time during the lifespan. However, the age at which participants experienced spirit at work varied according to their particular path. Those individuals on the *always there* path, reported experiencing spirit at work or being self-transcendent as early as childhood, but certainly by the beginning of their career. Larry, for example, shared stories of helping others in his community during childhood. Kelly, who is now 50 years old, reported being told by her father in her pre-school years to follow her heart and to listen to the voice within her. She also recalled a moving story of spirit at work at age 24 when she was working as a nurse in an intensive care unit.

Those participants on the *coming together* path tended to experience spirit at work during middle age. Of this group, 36 was the youngest age that spirit at work was experienced on a regular basis, however it was more commonly experienced during the participants' 40s. Although these individuals reported that spirit at work came together during middle age, they all reported having experiences along the way that kept them going. Most participants in this category related to spirit at work as a journey.

The *transformative* path seemed to happen at any age. Participants in this group also reported having moments of spirit at work along the way, but the point at which they described themselves as having and maintaining spirit at work was during their 30th and 43rd years. For these individuals, it seemed that the event, and how they responded to that event, was more meaningful to their experience of spirit at work than their particular age.

With respect to the contextually sensitive path, age also seemed to be irrelevant. Like those on the *always there* path, Sandra reported helping others during childhood and experiencing spirit at work at a young age. At 26 years of age, she described experiencing spirit at work most of the time. Even though she initially experienced spirit at work early in her career, Shelia reported having spirit at work (and losing it) at various times throughout her work history. These stories suggested that age is not relevant to the *contextually sensitive* path.

The relationship between a participant's age and his or her path to spirit at work poses an interesting question for future research. The varying ages at which spirit at work was experienced by these participants suggests that the experience can occur at any age. In this study, the number of individuals who experienced spirit at work early in their career was relatively equal to those who experienced it during mid-life. Regardless of when spirit at work was experienced, participants reported that the experience deepened over time. Moreover, most participants reported having defining moments along the way, sometimes as early as childhood.

Defining Moments as a Window to Spirit at Work

Most participants recalled experiencing defining moments, that is events or experiences, which influenced their career choice and view of work and life. These individuals suggested that it was those defining moments that put them on to the path of spirit at work or, at least, helped them to make decisions that would influence their experience of spirit at work. For participants on the transformative path, like Ben or Rose, the defining moment and the transformative event were the same. But for all, it was remembered as a significant event and influence in their lives, including their experience of spirit at work.

What was classified as a defining moment for participants varied. For example, Larry recalled, at the age of 12, of being inspired to a career in dentistry through his ongoing contact with his dentist. In addition to inspiring Larry's career path, the dentist became a role model for how Larry wanted to practice dentistry. He reported that the dentist "meant the world to me as a kid" and that he continued to emulate him in his practice.

As a result of her experience growing up in an unhappy and dysfunctional family, Donna made a conscious decision to live her life differently. She described the following as a defining moment:

> I promised myself something one day and I think I was probably in my late teens. . . . I must live each day in a way that if I died at the end of it I would be able to say, "That's okay. It was a good day." (Physician)

Another defining moment came in mid-life as she observed her father's anger with death. After concluding that there needed another way to deal with death and her own exploration of the meaning of death, she was able to better support dying patients in her practice. Easing terminally ill patients into death became an important and fulfilling part of her work.

Defining moments for other participants ranged from parents teaching them as children to listen to their own voice (Kelly), to a moment of enlightenment as to which career to choose (Larry, Sandra, Karla), to changing jobs (Noreen, Shelia), to the influence of a message from a movie (Ken), and to an actual experience of spirit at work (Rowena).

How the individual was impacted by his or her particular defining moment also varied. Some participants reported that a defining moment influenced their career choice, whereas others suggested that the experience changed their whole lives, and yet others described it as influencing their paths to spirit at work.

A relationship between the identified defining moment or moments and the experience of spirit at work, seemed to be present for most, but not all participants. Defining moments influenced whether participants experienced spirit at work, the path they took to spirit at work, the intensity of spirit at work, and career choices that were viewed as meaningful by participants. For example, those participants who were on the *always there* path tended to describe defining moments as occurring during childhood or in early adulthood. It was clear that these moments influenced the choice of career for one participant, but for others, it seemed to place them on the *always there* path to spirit at work. Although some participants, who described themselves as being on the *coming together* path, also identified such experiences in childhood, they generally reported experiencing defining moments later in their lives. For many in this group, this seemed to coincide with a time they reported everything coming together. The defining moments as described by individuals on the *transformative* path were the same events that participants reported as influencing their experience of spirit at work. Finally, one person on the *contextual path* identified a defining moment as a time when it became clear about her career choice whereas the other did not identify any. Although seemingly important to the experience of spirit at work or at least in the choice of careers, not all participants reported having defining moments. Moreover, the relationship between defining moments and the specific paths is not yet clear.

Discussion

Always there. Coming together. Transformative event. Contextually sensitive. These are the different paths that participants took to experience spirit at work. Viewed as a journey, each path was personalized and sustained through defining moments along the way. Defining moments, for a number of participants, seemed to be equivalent to what others call peak experiences or higher levels of consciousness (Maslow, 1968; Zevon, Roter, & Joerger, 1982). For some participants, these defining moments sustained them over time until spirit at work became a common experience. For others, they were transformative, resulting in the experience of spirit at work. Yet for others, the defining moment was a time when their values, beliefs, abilities, and experience melded and they came to experience spirit at work. The sense that spirit at work is a journey which generally deepens along the way, even for those individuals who are on the always there path, implies that spirit at work can be nurtured.

For the most part, the four paths that were identified provide support for each of the four perspectives identified from the literature and described earlier, about how one comes to experience spirit at work. The uncovering of these different paths suggests that spirit at work is a complex phenomenon and that many factors may be involved in its development. Nevertheless, they point to a variety of ways to foster spirit at work.

It is uncertain why the *always there* group constantly experienced spirit at work. It may be that individuals in this group share certain innate qualities that set them apart from people who do not experience spirit at work and, perhaps, even those who experience spirit at work, but do so by a different path. The notion that one's personality could influence and perhaps sustain the path to spirit at work, in spite of environmental conditions, lends support to the idea that spiritual intelligence (Emmons, 2000) may be a key component in the development of spirit at work. Conversely, it may be that the particular qualities of the *always there* group came together like the *coming together* group, but at a much earlier phase in their lives. Finally, it could be that some of them experienced a transformative event very early in life, making them more like the *transformative event* group. Regardless of how they got there, this group was different from the others in that they constantly experienced spirit at work.

The *coming together* path exemplifies the view that spirit at work is a journey. Unlike individuals on the *always there* path, it was only over time that those on the *coming together* path experienced spirit at work. Although most participants on this path experienced spirit at work around mid-life, it seems that the precipitating factor was spiritual growth, not generativity as Erikson's personality theory would have us believe. For most of these individuals, the importance of making a contribution towards others was evident early in their careers. What fostered the experience of spirit at work for those on the *coming together* path seemed to be a coming together of many things: their passion, values, abilities, and experiences; the process of reflexivity and self-discovery; and the knowing and doing what they think matters. This path supports the developmental view that for some individuals, spirit at work is a mid-life phenomenon that can be fostered by spiritual growth or the desire for generativity.

The path of *transformative events* suggests that a significant life event, whether positive or negative, can precipitate the experience of spirit at work. Whereas a spiritual awakening or epiphany that just happens may contribute to the experience of spirit at work, a spiritual crisis seems to demand a response that becomes spiritually transforming before it results in the experience of spirit at work. It is this response that transforms a defining moment into a transformative event. That such spiritual transformations affect one's relationship to his or her work is consistent with the finding of Neal and colleagues (1999), who reported that it is often as a result of these experiences that individuals begin to question their values, life priorities and way of living. Thus, significant life events including job loss, organizational takeovers, and downsizing should be viewed as opportunities as well as challenges. These significant events may indeed be defining moments that become transformative. This view is consistent with family crisis theory (Hill, 1949; McCubbin & Figley, 1983) which would present hypotheses indicating that times of crisis are times with potential for growth and change.

The *contextually sensitive* path implies that the experience of spirit at work is also influenced by one's environment, especially the context of one's work. Regardless of the path, most participants described their spirit at work experience as being influenced by organizational factors. However, the descriptions of impact indicate that the effect was much stronger for those on the contextually sensitive path. Their experience of spirit at work seemed to depend on the work context, that is, organizational characteristics such as leadership, inclusion, respect, support, teamwork, and recognition of one's contribution or one's work experience. Although they were on different paths, other participants also indicated that they only experienced spirit at work upon changing jobs or credited their leaders for creating environments that fostered their experience of spirit at work. These experiences further support the perspective that spirit at work may be influenced by the characteristics of the organization (Milliman, et al., 1999; Neck & Milliman, 1994).

Participants on all paths indicated taking responsibility for their experience of spirit at work. However, persons on the transformative path clearly demonstrated that they played a significant role in regaining the experience of spirit at work once they lost it. This idea of personal responsibility is consistent with Reker and Wong's (1988) theory of existential meaning which posits that meaning can be created through making choices, taking action, and engaging in relationships, which implies that the individual has a key role in the development of spirit at work.

Based on the emergence of these separate paths to spirit at work and the revealing of the strong support by participants of the significance of defining moments, it seems that: (a) spirit at work can be experienced by persons of any age, occupation, or socio-economic group (b) spirit at work can be fostered and nurtured; (c) personality likely contributes to the experience of spirit at work; (d) there may be personality differences between persons in the always there group and individuals in the other groups; (e) the development and growth of one's spirituality has the potential to lead to spirit at work; (f) organizational factors may foster or impede spirit at work; (g) individual crises can be transformative opportunities to foster spirit at work; and (h) defining moments occur at any age and can either sustain the individual over time or they can be transformative.

Like all studies, this research has generated questions that could direct future investigations. Do persons who achieve spirit at work through different paths have different personality profiles? For example, is the personality of those individuals on the *always there* path different from those on other paths? How can defining moments be uncovered or created for others, including children and young as well as mature adults, and used in the nurturing and creation of spirit at work? What is the process for persons who never develop spirit at work?

Whereas the paths to spirit at work seemed to be independent of a person's gender, choice of career, education level, or socio-economic status, the connection to particular factors that foster spirit at work remain unclear. Further research will be required to determine if personality characteristics can predict spirit at work or if the experience is affected by personal behaviours, organizational factors, or both. Systems theory would lead us to believe there are important interactions between person and environment. Perhaps spirit at work is determined by neither individual characteristics nor work environment, but the interaction of the individual and environment. It is this interrelationship between the internal and external worlds that is seen by some as fundamental to the creation of meaning (Guevara & Ord, 1996). Thus, it may be that it is the interrelationship between the individual's personality and work environment that is central to the creation of spirit at work. The identification of different paths suggests that unique interventions may be needed for people at different stages of life and may also point to the usefulness of transformative events as opportunities for interventions. Continued research on these questions is key to successful interventions. Unless we understand how spirit at work develops, we have no rationale for the development of programs to foster spirit at work and no basis to assess the impact of such programs in enhancing employee wellness or increasing productivity.

References

Adams, T., & Bezner, J. (2000). Conceptualization and measurement of the spiritual and psychological dimensions of wellness in a college population. *Journal of American Health, 48,* 4, 165-174.

Ashmos, D., & Duchon, D. (2000). Spirituality at work. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 9,* 2, 134-145.

Brandt, E. (1996). Workplace trends: Corporate pioneers explore spirituality. *HR Magazine,* April.

Caudron, S. (1997). The search for meaning at work. *Training and Development, 5,* 9, 24-32.

Cavanagh, G.F. (1999). Spirituality for managers: Context and critique. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 12,* 3, 186-199.

Charmaz, K. (2000). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 509-535). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Corbin, J. (1986). Qualitative data analyses for grounded theory. In W.C. Chenitz & J.M. Swanson (Eds.), *From practice to grounded theory: Qualitative research in nursing.* Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley.

Dehler, G.E., & Welsh, M.A. (1994). Spirituality and organizational transformation: Implications for the new management paradigm. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 9,* 6, 17-26.

Duxbury, L., & Higgins, C. (2002). *Work-life balance in the new millennium: Where are we: Where do we need to go?* (Executive Summary) Ottawa: Carleton University School of Business.

Elkins, D., Hedstrom, L., Hughes, L., Leaf, J., & Saunders, C. (1988). Toward a humanistic-phenomenological spirituality: Definition, description, and measurement. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 28,* 4, 5-18.

Emmons, R.A. (1999). Religion in the psychology of personality: An introduction. *Journal of Personality, 67,* 6, 873-88.

Emmons, R.A. (2000). Is spirituality an intelligence? Motivation, cognition, and the psychology of ultimate concern. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 10,* 1, 3-26.

Erikson, E. (1997). *The life cycle completed.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Erikson, E.H. (1959). Identity and the life cycle: Selected papers: Growth and crises of the healthy personality (Special Issue). *Psychological Issues, 1,* 1, 50-100.

Fairholm, G. (1997). *Capturing the heart of leadership: Spirituality and community in the new American workplace.* Westport, CT: Praeger.

Guevara, K., & Ord, J. (1996). The search for meaning in a changing work context. *Futures, 28,* 8, 709-722.

Hill, R. (1949). *Families under stress: Adjustment to the crisis of war separation and reunion.* New York: Harper.

Howard, S. (2002). A spiritual perspective on learning in the workplace. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 17,* 3, 230-242.

Human Resources Development Canada. (1997). Changing realities, enduring needs. In *Collective reflection: Report of the advisory committee on the changing workplace* (15pp). Ottawa: HRDC.

Izzo, J., & Klein, E., (1998). Awakening the corporate soul: Four paths to unleash the power of people at work. Canada: Fairwinds Press.

Jacobson, S. (1994). Spirituality and transformational leadership in secular setting: A Delphi study. (An abridgement of an unpublished dissertation). Seattle University.

Kinjerski, V.M., & Skrypnek, B.J. (2004a). Defining spirit at work: Finding common ground. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 17,* 1, 26-42.

Kinjerski, V., & Skrypnek, B. (2004b). Measuring spirit at work: Validating the spirit at work scale. Paper presented at the 2004 National Consultation on Career Development Conference, Ottawa, Ontario.

Konz, G.N.P., & Ryan, F.X. (1999). Maintaining an organizational spirituality: No easy task. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 12,* 30, 200-210.

Korac-Kakabadse, N., Kouzmin, A. & Kakabadse, A. (2002). Spirituality and leadership praxis. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 17,* 3, 165-182.

Krishnakumar, S., & Neck, C.P. (2002). The “what” “why” and “how” of spirituality in the workplace. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 17,* 3, 153-64.

Lee, C., & Zemke, R. (1993). The search for spirit in the workplace. *Training, 30,* 6, 21-27.

Leigh, P. (1997). The new spirit at work. *Training & Development, 51,* 3, 26-41.

Lowe, G. (2000). *The quality of work: A people centered agenda.* Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.

Maslow, A.H. (1968). *Toward a psychology of being (2^{nd} ed.)* Princeton: D. Van Nostrand.

McCubbin, H.I., & Figley, C. R. (1983). Introduction. In H. I. McCubbin & C.R. Figley (Eds.), *Stress and the family: Vol. I. Coping with normative transitions* (pp. xxi-xxxi). New York: Brunner/Mazel.

Mendoza, R.H. (1998). *The touch of a leader's soul: How a leader brings soul to an organization.* Unpublished Dissertation. Florida: University of Sarasota.

Milliman, J., Ferguson, J., Trickett, D., & Condemi, B. (1999). Spirit and community at Southwest Airlines: An investigation of a spiritual values-based model. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 12,* 3, 221- 233.

Mitroff, I., & Denton, E. (1999). A study of spirituality in the workplace. *Sloan Management Review, 40,* 4, 83-92.

Moxley, R. (2000). *Leadership and spirit: Breathing new vitality and energy into individuals and organizations.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Neal, J.A., Lichenstein, B.M.B. & Banner, D. (1999). Spiritual perspectives on individual, organizational and societal transformation. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 12,* 3, 175-185.

Neck, C., & Milliman, J. (1994). Thought self-leadership: Finding spiritual fulfillment in organizational life. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 9,* 6, 9-16.

O'Connor, K., & Chamberlain, K. (2000). Dimensions and discourses of meaning in life: Approaching meaning from qualitative perspectives. In G.T. Reker & K. Chamberlain, (Eds.), *Exploring existential meaning: Optimizing human development across the life span* (pp.75-91). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Paulison, G.L. (2001). *Leadership and spirituality: Relationship of spirituality factors to personality preferences of management.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Phoenix.

Piedmont, R.L. (2001). Spiritual transcendence and the scientific study of spirituality. *Journal of Rehabilitation, 67,* 1, 11 pg.

Porth, S.J., & McCall, J. (1999). Spiritual themes of the "learning organization." *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 12,* 3, 211-220.

Reker, G.T. (2000). Theoretical perspective, dimensions, and measurement of existential meaning. In Reker, G.T. & Chamberlain, K. (Eds.), *Exploring existential meaning: Optimizing human development across the life span* (pp. 39-55). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Reker, G.T., & Wong, P.T.P. (1988). Aging as an individual process: Toward a theory of personal meaning. In J.E. Birren & V.L. Bengston (Eds.), *Emergent theories of aging* (pp. 214-246). New York: Springer Publishing.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1994). Grounded theory methodology: An overview. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 273-285). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Tischler, L., Biberman, J., & McKeage, R. (2002). Linking emotional intelligence, spirituality and workplace performance: Definitions, models and ideas for research, *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 17,* 3, 203-218.

Zevon, M. A., Roter, P.M., & Joerger, S.M. (1982). Peak experience tendencies: Scale development and theory testing, *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 22,* 3, 92-108.

The Integrated Self: A Personality Profile of Individuals with High Spirit at Work

Personality characteristics have a pervasive influence on people's lives (McCrae & Costa, 1991) and act as a window into individual behaviour and outcomes. Thus, personality tests have been used as tools to facilitate self awareness and understanding. In the work environment, personality has been successful in predicting job performance and, as a result, is commonly used in the selection of employees (Hurtz & Donovon, 2000).

Spirit at work, an experience whereby individuals are enthusiastic about and find meaning in their work, is also believed to have a positive impact on job performance as well as individual subjective wellbeing. For example, spirit at work, or components of spirit at work, are related to an increased commitment in the workplace (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002) and organizational performance (Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Neck & Milliman, 1994). It is also associated with increased creativity, honesty, trust and an enhanced sense of personal fulfillment of employees (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). Thus, businesses and corporations have taken an interest in spirit at work in hope that it can be fostered in the workplace.

The connection between a worker's personality and his or her experience of spirit at work has not yet been explored. In fact, spirit at work is being promoted by some leaders and management consultants without answers to many basic questions. For example, how does one come to experience spirit at work, is the process similar for all individuals, can the experience be cultivated, and finally, is the experience related to personality? Research into spirit at work beyond conceptual inquiries is in its infancy and the bulk of this research has focused on organizational spirit at work, with an emphasis on the relationship between spirituality and workplace leadership (Cavanagh, 1999;

Jacobson, 1994; Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, & Kakabadse, 2002; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Neck & Milliman, 1994; Paulison, 2001). However, the emergence of individual-centered spirit at work as separate from organizational-centered spirit at work (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002) should lead to further understanding of the experience at the individual level, including the relationship between individuals who have spirit at work and personality.

The Concept of Individual-Centered Spirit at Work

Individual-centered spirit at work, or the feelings and thoughts one has about one's work efforts, is a relatively new concept. Individuals who experience spirit at work report a sense of alignment among their values and beliefs and their work, feel a strong sense of interconnectedness with others as well as a shared purpose, and find meaning in being engaged in work that has a higher purpose (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004).

Based on a review of the literature, Ashmos and Duchon (2000, p. 137) offered a conceptual definition of spirituality at work as "the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community." These authors viewed spirituality at work as having three components: an inner life, meaningful work, and community. They put forth the notion that employees were spiritual beings who expressed their inner life needs through involvement in meaningful work and living in connection with others.

Another conceptual definition that is grounded in individuals' experience proposes that individual spirit at work is a multidimensional construct encompassing physical, affective, cognitive, interpersonal, spiritual, and mystical aspects (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004). Although spirit at work has many dimensions, participants in the

Kinjerski and Skrypnek study were quick to point out that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. In this earlier definitional work, spirit at work was described as a holistic experience generally involving physiological arousal, positive affect, a belief that one's work makes a contribution and that it is consistent with one's values, a sense of connection to others and common purpose, a sense of connection to something larger than self, and a sense of perfection and transcendence (see Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004 for a more comprehensive definition). This clarity about what spirit at work is at the individual level sets the stage for examining how one comes to experience spirit at work and if one's personality plays a role in the experience.

Paths to Individual Spirit at Work

Previous research revealed that spirit at work is a journey and that individuals with high spirit at work take one of four distinct paths: always there, coming together, transformative event, and contextually sensitive (Kinjerski, 2004). The uncovering of these paths to spirit at work suggested that for some individuals, personality might indeed play a role in the development of spirit at work. In particular, the finding that spirit at work was a constant experience for almost half of the participants provides support for the view that individuals in this group may share a particular set of personality characteristics. It may be that individuals who report that spirit at work is always there may share certain qualities that set them apart from people who do not experience spirit at work and, perhaps, even those who experience spirit at work, but take a different path in order to do so. This leads to the question that provides the basis for this paper: What is the personality profile of individuals who experience spirit at work?

The Serendipity of Research

The original purpose of this study was to contribute to the development of theory about how individuals develop spirit at work in a paid work context. A secondary purpose was to determine factors that fostered spirit at work with an expectation of identifying specific individual actions and organizational features that enhanced spirit at work. There was no expectation that participants would identify who they were as people as an important aspect of their experience of spirit at work. However, while coding for behavioural and environmental factors that fostered individual-centered spirit at work, a cluster of personality characteristics related to spirit at work began to emerge. Surprisingly, but almost immediately, it became apparent that it was not only what these individuals did to foster spirit at work, but also who they were that influenced their experience of spirit at work. This led to the question: Is there a particular personality profile for persons expressing high spirit at work? Thus, the purpose of this paper is to utilize data gathered in the study of how one comes to develop spirit at work to answer this question.

Clarification of whether there is a particular personality profile for individuals experiencing high spirit at work may further the identification and understanding of individuals who possess spirit at work, even under very trying conditions, and those who do not. It could also facilitate exploration into the role personality and environment plays in the development of individual spirit at work.

Method

Research Design

Due to the relatively new nature of the concept of spirit at work, qualitative methods to study the phenomenon were seen as most appropriate. The process of how spirit at work develops requires the exploration of deeper perspectives that are best captured through in-depth, face-to-face discussions.

As my intent was to contribute to the development of theory about how spirit at work develops, grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2000) was selected. Grounded theory is a qualitative methodology which derives its name from the practice of generating theory from research which is "grounded" in data based on real life experiences (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). I chose grounded theory because, as a method, it goes beyond description and even the generation of theory to grounding that theory in data that are systematically gathered, analyzed, and interpreted through the research process. Grounded theory is particularly useful in areas lacking previous theoretical development and offers a means of exploring issues when data are not readily quantified (Corbin, 1986). Suited to questions about process, grounded theory fit well with this study about how individuals develop spirit at work and guided the sample, data collection, and data analysis.

Sample

Purposive sampling was used to identify individuals with varying characteristics who reported high levels of spirit at work. A sample was sought that reflected variation in gender, age, education, socioeconomic status, and occupation. Potential research participants were either known to the researcher, identified based on referrals, or identified from published stories about successful work experiences in local newspapers. Of this group, 15 individuals were interviewed, but only 13 individuals with self-identified high levels of spirit at work who were in paid full-time employment were included in the final analysis.

Thirteen individuals (10 females and 3 males) ranging in age from 26 to 81 years participated in the study. Twelve participants were Caucasian, one was Aboriginal. The vast majority of participants were married or living common-law (n=10), three were widowed or divorced. Their highest level of education included a high school diploma (n=2), apprenticeship or special training (n=3), a 2-year diploma (n=2), an undergraduate degree (n=2), or a graduate or professional degree (n=4). Occupations included: administrative assistant, dentist, educator, hairdresser, landscape designer, medical doctor, organizational consultant, parking attendant, physiotherapist, police officer, professor, real estate agent, and receptionist.

Six participants were either self-employed or the head of professional corporations or both; seven were employees. All participants worked full-time, with hours ranging from 30 to 80 hours per week. Participants reported a range of income. Six participants reported incomes between $25,000 and $50,000, three reported incomes from $50,000 to $100,000, and four reported incomes over $100,000.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to the ethical guidelines of the University of Alberta. Accordingly, participants were informed about the nature of the study prior to and again in the first interview before agreeing to participate and giving written consent to use their data. Participants were aware that their involvement was voluntary, that they could decide to withdraw at any time, and that they could decide against having their story included in the study. None of the participants exercised this option. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. Participants were immediately given pseudonyms and all identifying information was removed from the transcripts. Audio-tapes are stored separately from the consents and will be erased upon completion of my degree.

Data Collection

Data were collected through one, in-depth and reflective interview with each participant that lasted from one and one-half to two hours. Interviews were conducted in environments that were most convenient and comfortable for the participants, generally in their home or office. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Demographic information was collected in the beginning of the interview. I made hand-written notes of key points which I explored further with the participant during the interview. As soon after the interview as possible, I recorded a memo outlining my reactions and thoughts about the interview and data.

In each interview, participants were asked to describe their experience of work and to rate themselves on a spirit at work scale. Then they were asked to tell a story about a time that they experienced spirit at work, a time that they felt like they made the right career choice, felt good about their work, and felt most alive, involved and excited about their work. This was followed by an exploration of the personal and external factors that fostered and impeded their experience of spirit at work. The interview then moved to an exploration of the individual's experience of work over time, with a focus on when the experience was strongest, was not present, and the reasons for the change. Questions about the perceived benefits of spirit at work and potential downside were next. Finally, participants were asked to identify three things that would enhance their spirit at work and what advice they would share with others interested in promoting spirit at work.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was informed by a grounded theory perspective (Charmaz, 2000, Strauss & Corbin, 1994, 1998). Grounded in data, this inductive method is used to develop theory which evolves through simultaneous and systematic collection and analysis of that data (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Although it was not the original intention of this study to uncover a personality profile of individuals with high spirit at work, early data analysis revealed that it was not only what these individuals did to foster spirit at work, who they were as people also seemed to matter. This discovery led to the question: What is the personality profile of individuals high on spirit at work? A second analysis of the data regarding factors that fostered spirit at work was then completed and the transcripts were coded for personality qualities.

In alignment with the emergent nature of grounded theory methods, data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously. Analytical steps included: (a) reading of the interviews to get an overview of the responses, (b) open coding of interviews which included terms like positive, happy, evil, contributive, (c) grouping of initial codes that appeared frequently into themes, such as positive attitude and energetic, (d) grouping of these personality codes into themes, for example, positive energy, (e) building of analytical categories and frameworks from themes, and (f) making comparisons and linking categories into a coherent framework.

Several strategies were incorporated to establish trustworthiness. Memo writing, which involves making a written record of analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), was used to assist the transformation from working with data to concepts and to continually reflect on the research process and data analysis. Transcripts were read by a senior researcher who continually reviewed the coding frame and emergent themes. Initial themes were reworked until agreement between the two researchers was achieved and all coded data fit the categories. Although I sensed two additional personality characteristics, humour and tolerance, the data did not support their inclusion. For example, although many participants joked or laughed throughout the interview, they did not identify humour as factor that fostered their experience of spirit at work so it was not included as a factor.

Findings

A set of personality traits emerged as being characteristic of the participants in this study that seemed to transcend age, gender, education, socio-economic status, and type of work. Analysis revealed six themes: inner harmony, positive energy, self-transcendence, conscientiousness, openness to possibilities, and a spiritual inclination. Of these six personality characteristics, the first four were expressed strongly by all participants. More variation was found in the dimensions of openness to possibilities and spiritual inclination. Whereas openness to possibilities and spiritual inclination was also expressed strongly by the majority of participants, they were articulated to some degree by all participants. Theme descriptions follow with representative quotes from participants. Despite a possible overlap among these six themes, they are presented separately to fully explicate the findings. For example, depending on how deeply interconnectedness is experienced, it might be seen as fitting under spiritual inclination rather than self-transcendence as I chose to place it.

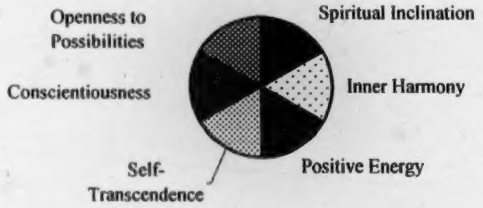
Openness to Possibilities
Spiritual Inclination
Conscientiousness
Inner Harmony
Self-Transcendence
Positive Energy

Figure 3-1. Spirit at Work Personality Dimensions

Inner Harmony

Integrated
Calm
Secure & Aware

Figure 3-2. Dimension of Inner Harmony

All participants who experienced high spirit at work reported an inner harmony that was characterized by calmness and serenity, a sense of security and awareness, and a sense of integration.

Calm and Serene. For the most part, participants described themselves as serene, calm, and peaceful. Participants presented themselves as composed, grounded, and in control of self. They reported that they were rarely angry, discouraged or impulsive. Maureen, a hairdresser, stated, "I feel calm. I feel calm all the time now." This calmness also extended to their work. As Ben, a physiotherapist explained, "So, how I feel most of the time is calm, not tranquil, that would be a bit too much, but I feel like I am able to concentrate on each individual I see." This calm, peaceful state seemed to coincide with a sense of wellbeing that was apparent with each participant. Participants were quick to identify that although this was their general experience, they were not calm or serene all the time as expressed by Kelly:

> . . . what's the word – serenity. Not that I am serene every minute of the day but there is a serenity in following the guidance and knowing that you did the best you could. . . . there is a calmness, a calm . . . as opposed to being sort of jaggedy, there is an assurance . . . and a feeling that it is right (Organizational Consultant, female, age 50).

Secure and Self Aware. Inner harmony was also illustrated by the participants' security and self awareness. These individuals, with high levels of spirit at work, reported comfort with self and high levels of self-acceptance. They demonstrated an awareness that encompassed a consciousness of attitude and thought, an understanding of what provided them with meaning, and attentiveness to how they lived their lives. This awareness created a platform from which they made conscious choices as illustrated by Karla:

> I . . . am more interested in how our own thoughts affect our lives – how strong the power of our thoughts is – and being aware of our own attitudes and thoughts. . . . At times, [I]choose not to have certain thoughts, but to check things, being aware that maybe, being overwhelmed is not serving a purpose, but more of a negative. Or you know when you get into self-doubt, realizing that this is not helping at all (Landscape Designer, female, age 48).

Maureen's story showed the process and result of her search for personal awareness:

> I worked in trendy salons . . .but I don't know if that was actually the thing for me. Like I was doing something that I thought was right for me, for my image, but I don't think I knew myself. . . . I didn't know what I was about, which direction I needed to go in and I think a lot of it [was] just a youthful thing. You kind of do what your friends do. I think I am just happy with who I am now and in those days, I wasn't happy with who I was, working in the wrong places. It was just trying to discover, the self- discovery thing, so I had to work my way out of that before I could get to [this] place. So I think that was a lot of it. . . . just being comfortable with myself (Hairdresser, female, age 42).

Integrated. The last indicator of these participants' inner harmony was a sense of integration. Participants described themselves in ways which revealed personalities in which the individual elements – physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual – were combined harmoniously into a whole. Although some reported striving for a balance among these four aspects, others described seeking integration of self. Recognizing that particular elements may take precedence at different times in their lives, they still attempted to honour their complete selves all of the time. Participants reported that they valued the expression of their complete selves and that they generally presented themselves to others as authentic, that is, genuine and true to themselves. For some, this integration was seen as a "coming together." Noreen shared this sense:

> I think I am in a rare position where my skills that I have been developing as a teacher, my faith I have been developing as a Christian, and my passion has all come together in this position. I feel more at home I think that I have felt in a long time (Educator, female, age 45).

In addition to the integration of skills, faith, and passion, Noreen also spoke about the connection and balance between soul and spirit, between the past and future, and between the familiar of the old and the draw to experience the new. She explained:

> I think as we grow up, all the experiences that we had leads us in a certain way and helps our passion to develop. . . It is something deeper than that, Val, and that has something to do with spirit. I think that there is a difference between soul and spirit. Soul is the connected, the rootedness stuff, the being home, the comfort food part of our existence and the spirit is the part that needs to take flight, to go out on a tangent to see where it takes you. And we need the balance of both. We need to feel that comfortable, home based connection to the past part and we need the flight. We need the space to soar to try something new, and that is the spirit part.

Many individuals in this study spoke of integration between their private and work lives, suggesting that these spheres cannot be separated. Donna, a physician, suggested that the benefits she received as a result of her private pursuits positively impacted her work experience and gave her a reason to get up and go to work each day. Karla, a landscape designer, also spoke about how she had been able to integrate her many interests and passions into her day-to-day work. It seems that, for several participants, integration occurred on many levels: integration of the 'whole self', integration of one's private and work life, and integration of the past and future.

These examples of calmness, a sense of security and self awareness, and a sense of integration of self support the impression that inner harmony is a personality characteristic of these individuals who experienced spirit at work.

Positive Energy

Figure 3-3. Dimension of Positive Energy

A second theme of individuals who reported experiencing spirit at work centered on high levels of positive energy. This positive energy was represented by positive emotions and attitudes, enthusiasm and passion, and action and perseverance.

Positive Emotions and Attitude. Positive energy was demonstrated through participants' positive emotions and positive attitude. Participants presented as happy, easy to be around, and optimistic. They shared an attitude that outcomes would be positive and good would prevail. For many participants, optimism was expressed in their confidence in being able to make a difference, such as was evidenced in statements like, "I can offer something that can be used in a meaningful way." They had a sense that their work was contributive or was transformative.

Even though some individuals referred to themselves as introverts, they reported being positive at work. These characteristics were readily observed in the interviews and acknowledged by participants. For example, Maureen described herself as a positive person:

> I am not a moody person. . . . Most of the time, I am up and if I feel down, I will fight tooth and nail to get out of that. . . . I really try to get that [a positive attitude] (Hairdresser, female, age 42).

Having a positive attitude appeared to be critical to these respondents. Molly, a receptionist, was very clear that, "If you have a piss poor attitude about everything . . . you are not going to be happy with anything anyway." Participants also reported feeling good about themselves, about the work they were doing, and the sense that they were making a difference. Even though they were trained and expected themselves to do good work, when they did, participants reported being moved by what they accomplished.

Positive affect was something experienced by these individuals regardless of whether the outcome was successful or not. For some participants, it seemed that positive affect increased as the difficulty of the situation increased. This was the case for Donna when she delivered a high risk baby. Although the experience was difficult and emotional, and the expected results were tenuous at the time, Donna described the experience as one of her peak experiences that was "overwhelmingly positive."

Enthusiastic and Passionate. Participants expressed an enthusiasm and passion in life and specifically, about their particular work, that seemed to be contagious. Ben discussed the momentum that seemed to come from and, at the same time, fed his enthusiasm:

> And that momentum gets carried on from one person to the next, so it kind of feeds me as I go through the day. It motivates me to be proactive and to help others with the same kind of enthusiasm (Physiotherapist, male, age 36).

Participants disclosed that this enthusiasm extended to others as well. For example, Larry, a dentist, reported awareness that his enthusiasm was also shared by his family, even when he was required to leave a family celebration to alleviate a patient's pain.

These individuals were conscious of the passion they had for their particular work and often suggested that there was not another job that that they were interested in doing. Rose, a real estate agent, summed it up for many of the participants, "It just gets to be that you love it. . . . I can't think of anything else I could do. . . . I just love everything about it."

Active and Perseverant. Most participants presented themselves as action-oriented and perseverant. Their positive energy was illustrated through their attitude, relationships, and the way they went about their work. Participants reported taking initiative, going after things that they viewed as important, and persisting until their goal is achieved. They seemed to share tenacity as is indicated in comments like, "you have to persevere" and "we all push ourselves way too far." Individuals in this study described an attitude of "just do it." It did not matter if it was part of their job description, if something needed to be done, they expected it to be done.

Not only were they persistent; participants exemplifying high spirit at work reported being energized by their work which, in turn, seemed to feed their activity level. Several participants reported that their energy level was higher when they were busy; momentum seemed to feed their energy level. Ben, a physiotherapist, talked about the momentum that carried on from others, that fed and motivated him. He referred to his work as intense, but that was exactly how he liked it. Donna, a physician, questioned whether she would be as satisfied if she did not go the pace that she goes in terms of the number of patients she sees. Sandra, a police officer, talked about the rush she got from going from one call to another. Larry, the dentist, acknowledged that he liked stress and that he actually worked much better under stress. Rose, who always seemed to be on the go, said of being in real estate, “It’s a matter of being busy.” Maureen, a hairdresser summed up her experience as, “To me, the slower days aren’t that good. Like, I had a slower day today and I don’t enjoy that quite as much because I don’t feel as energetic when I am slower.” She noted when she was busy she had a lot of energy, “I had so much energy that week. We were working 12 hour days and then I would go for a run and I just had so much energy and it was clicking.”

The overall positive, optimistic, enthusiastic, and passionate nature of participants, combined with their perseverant and active disposition suggests that positive energy is a personality trait of these individuals.

Self-Transcendence

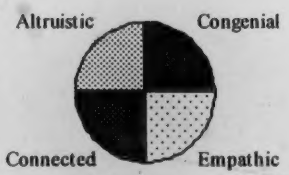

Figure 3-4. Dimension of Self-Transcendence

A third key personality facet that emerged from the data analysis was that of the self-transcendent nature of participants. Self-transcendence was illustrated by comments about being interconnected, congenial and respectful of others, empathic and compassionate, and altruistic. Although participants described themselves at varying levels of transcending self-interest, they all shared the conviction of serving others, as explained by Ben:

> I think that we are supposed to be in service to others. I think that is very important for fulfilling oneself, that is, being of service of others. I don’t think

> you can feel that way unless you are helping somebody. I believe that is a part of your life – that people don't feel full or complete unless they are actually giving something of themselves to somebody else. It doesn't matter who, but to somebody else and in that sense I think they can be happy with how they are (Physiotherapist, male, age 36).

Interconnected. Self transcendence was illustrated by a deep sense of interconnectedness. All participants shared a deep connection to humanity, nature, or the universe. In particular, they shared a strong connection with others and reported liking people. Relationships were important and often, strong relationships developed over time. For years, Rose made muffins and delivered them to clients who were alone or in nursing homes because it was something for them to look forward to receiving. Many of these people have been her customers for years. In fact, many participants reported having patients or customers for the extent of their career which, for some, spanned over 30 years or more.

A common way of dealing with customers or clients, for these individuals, was to connect with them from the heart. Mutuality and a shared experience with clients, customers or patients was a commonly reported experience. In fact, Ben said that was what drew him to work in physiotherapy. Recognizing that her patients followed her treatment suggestions base on a sacred trust and some element of faith, Donna reported connecting and working with each patient in a way that permitted them to stay open, which often included sharing her own vulnerability. Some participants went as far as treating them like they would like their family members to be treated. Larry offered:

> One thing I always say is, what if that was your mother or your brother or sister in the chair, what would you do? Don't treat anyone differently than you would treat your family (Dentist, male, age 55).

This was also echoed by Sandra:

> Think about the person and those that are attached to him or her. He has a mother, a father, a brother, a sister, extended family. Think about the impact on them. What does that mean if the aunt has to leave her family to come and help? (Police Officer, female, age 26)

However, for many participants, this connection went beyond just liking people. These individuals seemed to recognize a oneness, that everyone and everything was part of the whole, influencing and affecting one another. This sense of oneness was reflected in Ben's comment, "What happens to them as individuals happens to you, always. So, their healing is yours. Their happiness is yours." This deep interconnectedness was also seen to extend to one's thoughts, as Rowena explained, ". . . my thoughts and what I have done, and what I choose to continue to focus on will impact them. I know that, just as theirs will impact on me."

This strong sense of interconnection may be at the root of the 'self transcendence' and 'spiritual inclination' traits. Karla explained not only her connection to nature, but the connection she had with others in helping them become re-enchanted with nature through her work:

> Starting with a hobby, the interest in gardening, and really just working on my own garden for a few years, and throughout that, coming to feel a strong connection with nature *all* the time. . . . It was an awakening of . . . that connection to nature [that] was certainly there as a child . . . but revived again as a hobby. . . . That connection, to me, I see as helping all people becoming re-enchanted with nature or to create things that are enchanting to people as well, that help them to, perhaps, rediscover their connection to nature (Landscape Designer, female, age 48).

Congenial and Respectful. The congenial and respectful nature of participants pointed to the "self-transcendent" trait. All participants presented themselves as friendly, good hearted, kind, agreeable and gracious. Their considerate nature was first noted in the interviewer's interaction with them. For example, one individual was worried about the impact of delaying the interview by one week because of his father's death. Similarly, another participant was very apologetic because she would be away during the period she was asked to meet and tried to accommodate the interviewer's time lines by offering to meet on the week-end. This friendly and accommodating nature was noted by others. For example, the parking attendant reported that customers told him that that they parked in his parkade because he was friendly.

Respect for others, in particular, of their situations and perspectives seemed to be important to these individuals who experienced high levels of spirit at work. Ben talked about creating a connection with others through showing respect and compassion:

> In your interaction with individuals at work, your fellow employees, showing them respect for their thoughts, their ideas, compassion in that sense, kindness towards them. That creates a connection or makes it that much more pleasant. . . . It is all about being kind (Physiotherapist, male, age 36).

Calling it the "platinum rule," as opposed to the "golden rule," Kelly advised "do unto others as they would like to have been done to." Participants in this study appeared to recognize the value of other people.

Empathic and Compassionate. Self-transcendence was also demonstrated by participants' empathy and compassion. These individuals, who exemplified high levels of spirit at work, seemed to have a strong capacity for concern for others. Ben put forth that a person's intention toward somebody is the most important aspect of what one does, "So your intention is kindness, compassion, you are not there for you, you are there for them." Larry, a dentist, spoke about the importance of working with the whole person, including their emotions and wellbeing. He shared a story about how an adult patient told him that the only birthday card she had ever received had come from his office. He also cited examples of disrupting family celebrations to help someone who was in desperate pain. Sandra's comment reflected the statements of other participants in this study, "I care about those people [clients with who she works] and how they feel" (Police Officer, female, age 26).

Altruistic. A need or desire to be altruistic was another way these individuals illustrated being self-transcendent. Contributing to the wellbeing of others or improving a situation was a desire shared by all participants. Although they indicated that being of service to others was important to personal fulfillment, participants were clear that they were there for the customer or patient, and not themselves. Donna clarified, "We have to remind ourselves why we are here. We are here, not for us, but for our patients." In the same way, Maureen talked about "rising above" one's bad day in order to serve others:

> It doesn't matter whether you have a bad day because you have to leave it at the door because you know, those people are coming in there, they are paying good money and they want to have a service and feel good and it is all about them. It is not about you (Hairdresser, female, age 42).

Participants always seemed to be thinking about how to make it better or how to help out. They went the extra mile to help others. For example, the parking attendant asked himself about the things he could do to make the parkade look better, the receptionist filled out patient forms and had them ready right away, the doctor read an article and immediately called the patients to whom it applied, and the real estate agent delivered muffins to elderly customers on a weekly basis. Because their focus was on others or improving a situation, participants reported doing things that they thought were helpful, even if they did not particularly want to do it. For example, Sandra cited several examples of attending meetings on her days off, which in turn, cut into her personal time. Nevertheless, these individuals appreciated that it was part of their job, or that it had benefits for others. Even in difficult situations, like police investigations, where the individual being questioned did not appreciate the intervention, these individuals with high levels of spirit at work were altruistic and saw how they were being helpful. Sandra said:

> I like people and I like helping them. That is what I love. And, no matter what I am doing, I am helping them (Police Officer, female, age 26).

All of these examples support the view that individuals experiencing high levels of spirit at work are self-transcendent, sharing a sense that human beings are to be in service of others. In fact, many participants reported choosing their careers based on the opportunity to help others or to be able to give something back.

Conscientiousness

Figure 3.5. Dimension of Conscientiousness

The fourth personality theme that emerged was conscientiousness, characterized by an ethical disposition, achievement striving, an intrinsic orientation, and awareness of capacity.

Ethical Disposition. Participants illustrated a sense of integrity. To these individuals, it was very important to do what was right, and they all had a sense of what that was. These individuals seemed to live by their own particular code of conduct. In response to the researcher's observation that their actions were above and beyond the call of duty, participants frequently responded with statements like "that is just the way I am," "that is just what I do" and "I am a policeman . . . and that is what we do." They shared a moral and ethical strength that seemed to result in a high level of conscientiousness as illustrated by Sandra's explanation that she tried to deal with the whole problem and provide a long-term solution by:

> . . . taking a little extra step, instead of band-aiding everything and saying "this is good for now and everything will be fine" because . . . lots of people will just fix it for now because that is all [they] have to deal with (Police Officer, female, age 26).

Ben's quote further exemplified that sense of obligation to the client or customer that seemed to be present for most participants:

> . . . The person has made the effort to come here, [so] they deserve your full attention at that time while you are there so you can't be running around in your mind. Also physically, you have to be there for them and try to – they have this much time for you to help them, so you have to be there for that entire time (Physiotherapist, male, age 36).

Achievement Striving. Participants expressed a high level of personal striving and were motivated in goal directed behaviour. Talking about being the best one could be or doing one's best was common among the participants. As Sandra shared, "Well, I am kind of a perfectionist in *all* parts of my life (laughs) and even when I had other jobs, I wanted to do everything the best." Larry advised other dentists to be the best they could be, "You may not be the world's best but you have to be the best [you can be]."

Interested in results, participants often had clarity about their own purpose and the intention and direction of their work, making choices that directed their lives toward certain outcomes. However, rather than achieve for personal gain, their focus tended to be on outcomes that were contributive to the higher good of society. As a physician shared her experience in saving a baby's life who she was helping to deliver:

> But you have to do it. Push. You have to push yourself in some situations that you would rather go home and read the paper. . . . because I must release this person's dis-ease. I must do what I can to help this baby to survive. . . . It is awful. How do I do that? I don't know. How did I get through the moment? I don't know. I think

> you just have to put yourself way on the back burner and get a little "automata" to do some of it and hope for the best outcome (Physician, female, age 53).

Accomplishments and positive results were often the result of this achievement striving nature, as indicated by Karla, "And then the accomplishment, there is no doubt that I do like the feeling of having done something, of seeing the result."

Inner-directed and Intrinsically Oriented. Conscientiousness was also illustrated by an inner directedness that was shared by participants in this study. Rather than waiting for direction or instructions from others, these individuals with a propensity for spirit at work described themselves as being self-directed and self-disciplined. They seemed to have a capacity for determining and pursuing goals that gave them personal meaning and was congruent with their belief system.

Participants disclosed that, for them, rewards from work were a significant motivator. Although the majority identified extrinsic rewards as part of their work, it was the intrinsic rewards, those that were inherent to the activity they were engaged in, that seemed to be most significant. References to the positive effects of the intrinsic rewards included "that's what makes me want to get up in the morning", "that raison d'être," "keeps me at it," "gets me cranked," and "makes getting up and going to work [okay]." This intrinsic orientation was also demonstrated when some individuals talked about their personal need to do the work they were doing, that "there is something in me that will not be satisfied . . . if I don't do it." Others talked about it nourishing the spirit and soul, and that was their reward. In talking about her experience in acute care, Donna described her feelings as:

> It felt warm, glorious, like I had a reason to be on this earth, quivery inside. . . . [It] was overwhelmingly positive. *Overwhelming.* Like not just a little. *Overwhelmingly.* So why shouldn't I get up and go to work the next day? I

> should. . . . That is part of the thing that gets you up the next morning. You just nourished your soul and in some way it is worth it to get up the next day (Physician, female, age 53).

Seeing results and positive outcomes as a result of their effort was rewarding and appeared to be all they needed. They reported feeling good about what they were able to accomplish, how they helped others, made a difference, and the results they were able to see.

Aware of Capacity. One way that conscientiousness was illustrated was through participants' awareness of their own capacity and ability to make a contribution. Larry's statement illustrates this level of consciousness:

> I think I feel like a singer who can hit all those high notes and people applaud. I can't sing, I can't draw, I can't do anything, I can't sculpt, I can't fix machines, but boy, can I fix teeth . . . (Dentist, male, age 55).

In addition to a sense of their own competence and effectiveness, many of these individuals had been recognized externally through awards, appointments, and the media. Participants cited examples of resourcefulness and creativity that enabled them to solve problems or find necessary resources to be effective as exemplified by Rowena:

> They were looking for a different level of knowledge and expertise, which, yes, I could offer. However, that was not *all* I felt like I could offer. What I felt I was helping them to see and recognize and then become trained themselves in doing is how to engage in that kind of dialogue, where it is potentially so divisive, how can we actually bring them to the table with respect, that above all, the main outcome is respect for each other's human dignity, no matter how extreme they might be on either side. I witnessed that happening. . . . It was just great to see that they got what they were looking for and that is just like the many times I have done the same (Professor, female, age 47).

This awareness of capacity seemed to go hand in hand for these individuals with an obligation to do something. They reported being responsible and accountable, not only to others, but to themselves as well. All shared a strong work ethic and an attitude of doing what had to be done, as espoused by Molly, "If you are working and something has to be done, you just do it."

Many participants reported being actively sought out for their contribution and taking on tasks or following through on projects because someone made a request of them. Even though Sandra only had three years service and was younger than some fellow officers, she was often asked to take the lead in assignments. Another participant became president of his professional association.

This sense of obligation was also reflected in a lack of absenteeism. For example, the dentist recalled missing three days in 31 years and one of these was for his father's funeral. Many spoke of going to work when they were tired or not feeling well or participating on committees on their days off. They spoke of an awareness of the impact a decision not to go into work or to complete an assignment would have on their customers or clients.

The tendency towards a strong ethical nature, the achievement striving trait of participants, an intrinsic orientation, and awareness of capacity is an indicator that conscientiousness is a personality trait of individuals with high spirit at work.

Openness to Possibilities

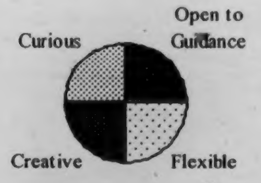

Figure 3-6. Dimension of Openness to Possibilities

The fifth personality characteristic that emerged was an openness to possibilities, referring to one's tolerance for and exploration of the unfamiliar. This trait was illustrated through participants' openness to guidance, flexibility, creativity, and intellectual curiosity.

Open to Guidance. One way participants were open to possibilities was being open to guidance. Most individuals in this study expressed a willingness to receive guidance and direction, which came in a variety of forms, ranging from within the individual to some supernatural phenomenon. The origin of this guidance seemed mostly to depend on the person's belief system. Some reported that it came from a Higher Power or a Universal Source, whereas for others, it seemed to be a natural tendency or instinctual.

Noreen shared her openness to receiving guidance from God:

> Where that comes from, that is part of the mystery. I am convinced that that is part of God at work, whatever you call God, a Higher Being or Creator or whatever. That spark, that passion comes from that mystery that is so hard to define. . . . I think of it as God being part of us. I don't have the image of God as being a separate entity. I think of God as being a part of who we are. It is just another well to tap into (Educator, female, age 45).

Noreen saw individuals as co-creators with God, suggesting that although God worked through people, each person had free will to do what they thought was right. Ben took a different twist on this and suggested that it was one's own life force or energy that comes from inside a person.

Intuition, that ability to discern the true nature of a person or situation and a seemingly knowing of what to do, was a common trait shared by participants and was seen to be an important source of information. Shelia's comment was reflective of most participants:

> I like to think that I'm pretty intuitive. I can usually see things that other people don't even notice. . . . [Intuition plays a role] in working with others, just within your own team, in the one-on-one with the student, with other instructors, your own supervisor, that sort of thing. . . . Being intuitive and reading the body

> language is so important to being better at what you do (Administrative Assistant, female, age 52).

Some participants, such as Sandra, even referred to themselves as being psychic:

> In this work [police work], it is so important to listen to your body, to listen how you feel, what it is telling you. I am a little psychic . . . I can often tell something is going to happen before it happens. For example, when I got really hurt, my body was saying, "don't get out of the car, it is not safe." I knew – and – I was right. He tried to kill me. Listening to your intuition can save you. . . . I am like a radio. I can tell what people are thinking, like 'leave me alone. I don't want to talk to you.' It is very helpful because I know what they are feeling (Police Officer, female, age 26).

Others referred to themselves as a conduit, recognizing their ability to receive and pass on an energy that contributes to well-being of others. Rowena disclosed, "You can be that transforming type. I should say, as a conduit. In other words, it doesn't come from us, necessarily, but that we are opening ourselves so that that energy can flow through us." Donna also saw herself as a conduit, a vehicle for a Higher Power, when she saved a baby's life.

What was common to these participants was the openness to receive and listen to such direction. However, whereas the majority spoke of being intuitive or receiving guidance from a source larger than self, not everyone identified it as a resource. In fact, some individuals did not mention it until I raised it as a topic. It seemed like participants did not have the comfort to freely discuss intuition as a source of guidance. When told that others spoke of being a conduit, for example, some were surprised to hear that others were using the term; whereas others saw it as an invitation to share their own view.

Flexible. A second way that openness to possibilities was illustrated was participants' flexibility. For the most part, these individuals did not to hang on to ways that no longer served the purpose. Participants reported keeping things that served them well and letting go or modifying those that were not working. Some spoke of being open to mentors and having a willingness to look at things differently and to try new ways. Others reported trying different things if something was not working. Ben explained this second view:

> Is what you are doing on a daily basis . . . Is that fulfilling for you? Is it nurturing you? Is it a part of what you want to accomplish in your life? If it is not, then you have to find a way to make it happen or change it completely. I think that is the biggest question. It is the only question, really. You can change anything that you put your mind to. It is just finding the courage to do it. So whether you want to do it at the job you are at or just take it a completely different direction (Physiotherapist, male, age 36).

Knowing that change was inevitable, participants seemed to be more accepting of change and found ways to work with it. Larry summed it up, "I am a realist, shit happens and you deal with it. You just go on." In fact, some reported pursuing change if they thought that it would help them to achieve their goals and fulfill their purpose. Participants indicated that often, they had to push themselves to take a risk, albeit a calculated risk, to try something new. Karla's comments illustrate this point:

> I would not consider myself as flighty or a big risk taker on so many things, [but] still very willing to experiment, still willing to try new things and I think have finally seen that things work out. So even now, when I feel some anxiety when I find myself in a new situation out of the comfort zone, I have learned a little better to remind myself that I have done this before and it has worked out. So I think that willingness to try. Just try and see what happens (Landscape Designer, female, age 48).

Creative. Another way that the openness to possibilities trait was demonstrated was through participants' creativity. Creativity presented itself in many forms. For some participants, it was the artistic creation in art, music, and the written word that we are generally familiar with, but for many, it was the ability to be innovative, resourceful, and problem solving. When asked about the values that she held deepest about herself when she felt best about her work, the landscape designer spoke to her creativity, "I guess that sense of creativity, that sense of having creation, sense of teamwork. I do like working with others, that sense of process of creating with others as well." Maureen, a hair stylist also appreciated her creativity, especially since she had been able to complete the whole process with each client. She disclosed:

> I really get a lot out of styling hair. Like it is a creative job and it is always changing. I just really enjoy it, even after 26 years and I enjoy it right now more than I ever had. . . . It is nice to getting back into doing . . . all the colors and stuff like that. It just feels more complete, more innovative to do the whole thing (Hairdresser, female, age 42).

Rose used her creativity to ease the trauma for families having to move, particularly to new cities. She gave examples of driving clients to the plane and contacting colleagues in other centers, who, on her behalf, also made her client's transition easier, by providing things like school information and maps. Sandra even identified creativity in her role as a police officer:

> It is amazing. From the beginning of the call, you have the option of calling on so many different people, the dog man, the helicopter, the ERT team, there are so many different people that you can use or just people around that you know, like is there somebody around that is a trained negotiator or is there this person? There are so many different things to do with just calls, but then there are the people and there so many creative ways to deal with small situations (Police Officer, female, age 26).

Participants found creative ways to fulfill their intention and to achieve their goals. In some instances, it meant finding ways to go around the system, and in others, it meant trying innovative ways to gain the desired outcomes.

Intellectually Curious. Openness to possibilities was also demonstrated by participants' intellectual curiosity. Participants of all education levels described an openness to lifelong learning and willingness to continue with personal and professional development, often on their own time and expense. In addition to work related interests, participants reported exploring topics of spirituality, archaeology, music, the cosmos, death and dying, and Chinese Medicine.

These individuals identified learning as an important part of the job, whether it was taking the training and learning to be technically correct or ongoing opportunities to learn through work. Noreen revealed:

> For any job to feel really good, for the spirit to have room to move and have flight, there needs to be a learning component. There is always new material coming out, new resources within the church and outside the church (Educator, female, age 45).

For some participants, career choices were influenced by the opportunity for continued learning as indicated by Donna:

> I like this science – the science of the human body. And there is always something new going on. I wanted to do something that there would always be a learning process going on. That is an important part of what I do (Physician, female, age 53).

Learning, including reading, taking courses, and going to seminars, was often identified as a way participants satisfied this intellectual curiosity. Others reported feeding this intellectual curiosity through travel, as expressed by Maureen:

> I have traveled myself a bit and I think that that has really opened up my eyes. I think if I hadn't traveled, like if I hadn't gone to India, if I hadn't traveled to places like that I wouldn't be the same person today because it just totally affects how you see the world. So I think that was really important for me on the journey to get to this point (Hairdresser, female, age 42).

Whether travel led to openness or openness led to travel, was uncertain. However, travel was viewed as one factor that influences how one views the world.

These examples of participants' openness to guidance and intuition, their willingness to try new approaches, their creativity and intellectual curiosity support the view that openness to possibilities is a dimension of the spirit at work personality of participants.

Spiritual Inclination

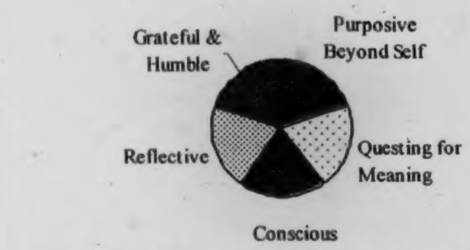

Figure 3-7. Dimension of Spiritual Inclination

The last set of personality characteristics demonstrated by participants was that of spiritual inclination. These individuals seemed to have an internal motivation towards spirituality which was characterized by a tendency towards reflexivity, a quest for meaning, purposiveness beyond self, consciousness, gratitude, and humility.

Reflective. Spiritual inclination was demonstrated by participants' reflective nature. Although all individuals had some degree of self-awareness, particularly about what was important to them, most were highly introspective and reflective. The majority reported going through a process of discernment and reflection and had an awareness of self. In particular, participants spoke of self-discovery, searching for their soul, figuring out who they were and what they were about, and finding out what mattered to them. They reported reflecting, sometimes on a daily basis, whether what they were doing was fulfilling, questioning whether they were helping or impeding the process, assessing their life, taking time to sort out skills, interests, and values, and being clear about who they were and what they valued. This openness to examining values and what was important to them as individuals culminated in an acceptance of their particular feelings and who they were as people. As Noreen explained:

> We make our connections to our learning, to our experiences. And, we find ways to give that spirit voice . . . You know, I think that when you go through a discernment process, figuring out what you want to do and what you are all about . . . we have to listen to . . . the feedback that we are getting from others, so they become a mirror for us. We test out things, try new ideas when we are tempting to give something voice and we hear back about how that is coming across and that helps to direct our path (Educator, female, age 45).

This reflexivity extended to participants' work and how they felt about their work, in particular, whether it was meaningful, in alignment with their passions, and if it was making a difference. Ben shared some of the questioning he underwent in his early years as a physiotherapist:

> When I first started, I would go home and say, 'Oh my God. What am I doing? Am I doing anything?' I don't think that way anymore. For the first three or four years I would say, 'Am I doing anything here or helping anyone?' . . . I often think, 'Am I doing what I am supposed to be doing or should I think about going in a different direction? (Physiotherapist, male, age 36)

In addition to examining their role at work, experiences at work also led some individuals to reflect on their personal belief system outside of work. Donna shared how her work with palliative care patients led her to explore her own views on death and dying. In addition to questioning, "Do I ease people out as well as I should?" she disclosed being forced to examine her own thoughts.

In Quest of Meaning and Purpose. A second way a spiritual inclination was exemplified was through the participants' questing for meaning and purpose. Building on the belief that life was meaningful and that each person had a purpose in life, these individuals reported asking themselves, "Why am I here?" "Why am I on this earth?" "Is what [I am] doing on a daily basis fulfilling?" "How [am I] using the gifts [I] have been given?" "Why [am I] there [at work] and doing what [I am] doing?" In some sense, the search seemed to examine what was worthy of being committed to in one's work. One participant referred to it as an eternal search as to "Why do I get up every morning?"

What was viewed as meaningful varied from person to person, from situation to situation, and over time. Whereas some individuals found their actual work meaningful and couldn't imagine having another job, others found meaning in the work they did, even in things that appeared to be without meaning. As is highlighted in Karla's example, some were able to see the poetry in the everyday:

> It is that looking for meaning in things regardless, finding meaning in things that often seems meaningless. . . . That to me ties into meaning, finding and creating and enhancing meaning in certain activities. . . . It is more, what is the feeling that we get out of this, what kind of feeling are we wanting to create here and what I am doing – is it contributing to this feeling or not? So that is the check point I often use. . . . To me, it is a sense of poetry as well, a sense of imagery . . . You can see the poetry in the everyday (Landscape Designer, female, age 48).

Purposive Beyond Self. Spiritual inclination was also demonstrated by a sense of purpose and direction. Participants shared a general belief that everyone is born with a purpose or at least something to learn and that work was one way of expressing it. Kelly's comments reflected that of many participants:

> I think we come with a purpose or something we are meant to find out or learn about. . . . And, I believe that my purpose really is about ministering to people . . . through my work, but not completely through my work because I do it just because of who I am. It is a part of who I am as a person. It is not all of me, but I use all of me in my work (Organizational Consultant, female, age 50).

The participants seemed to have a personal mission, purpose, or vocation that was beyond self. Linked with a process of discernment and reflection, they reported seeking clarity about the larger reason for their existence. The more they engaged in that process, the clearer they seemed to be about their mission or purpose and how their work was related. For example, Donna was clear that because of her love for humanity, her mission in life was to ease suffering.

Like Kelly and Donna, participants who spoke about a personal mission referred to a mission in life, in which they were able to partially fulfill through work. However, not everyone spoke of having a mission. Those individuals who presented as less reflective tended to speak about their passion for their work, for example "real estate makes me tick." Although it was not apparent that Ken was passionate about his actual work as a parking attendant, it was very clear that he was passionate about his relationships and about making other people happy. It is of interest that, for these individuals, the focus of their mission, purpose, or passion was always in service of others; it was beyond self.

All participants spoke of alignment or fit between what was important to them and their work. Those individuals who had stayed in one career could not envision other work that they might have done, as exemplified by comments such as, "I can't think of another field I could have it in," "I just can't imagine having another job," "What else would I do?" and "I can't think of anything else, this is what I want to do for the rest of my life." Alignment was also evident in participants' feelings about their work, "I love what I do" "I love my work," "I have selected something that I am really happy doing," and "I have the perfect situation." The following observation by Karla, who was a career counsellor in a previous career, demonstrated the sense of alignment or fit between one's work and what mattered to the individual:

> Like the career counselling, I found very engaging and there was an element of spirit there because it did feel right to be working in that topic area and working with others, and helping people to come to some decisions for themselves as well. . . . That was something that I felt very connected to and would feel good at the

> end of the day and would feel that it was a good fit as well (Landscape Designer, female, age 48).

Conscious. The spiritual inclination trait was further illustrated by the conscious nature of participants. These individuals reported having an awareness of their belief system and what mattered to them. They disclosed a cognizance of thought, and, in particular, the power of positive and negative thoughts. As exemplified by Karla's statement, "I am more interested in how our own thoughts affect our lives – how strong the power of our thoughts is – and being aware of our own attitudes and thoughts." Participants seemed to be conscious of choices they made and how they lived their lives. For example, Rowena declared:

> I feel an awakening to the fact that we can either choose to be a part of the building process and a conduit to allow that energy to flow through us or we can do things, make decisions, and think of ways that actually, somehow abridge that (Professor, female, age 47).

Participants reported being mindful and intentional about achieving their purpose and goals. Having clarity about their purpose or reason for being, they consciously worked toward achieving their higher purpose and in a manner that was meaningful to them. Ben explained how intention guides his behaviour:

> Your intention toward somebody is the most important aspect of what you are doing. So, your intention is kindness, compassion, you are not there for you, you are there for them . . . That whole intention is part of the spirituality about how I go about things (Physiotherapist, male, age 36).

Sense of Gratitude and Humility. A sense of gratitude and humility was the last way these individuals were spiritually inclined. This sense of gratitude was expressed in a variety of ways. Some participants saw themselves as privileged to do the work they did, whereas others were grateful for the opportunities they were given to be involved in work that was important to them. For example, on her drive back after a meaningful presentation on a very contentious topic, Rowena recalled feeling graced by being involved in something so important and thanking God for allowing her to be a part of that. Another participant's comments reflected the feelings expressed by many, "I am glad to be alive. I am glad to go work. I am glad to be doing what I am doing."

Along with being grateful, individuals tended to be modest, humble and unpretentious. Donna, a physician, spoke of consciously keeping "a certain humility about herself" in order to be reminded of her limited powers. Although participants took responsibility for their actions and their work, they seldom took credit for their skills or abilities. Instead, some people, like Larry, referred to them as gifts:

> I really care for people and I care about people. I am very empathetic. I don't feel superior to people and I learned that from my father. . . . My patients will often say to the staff that I am not pretentious . . . My attitude is that I am the same as everyone; this is the gift I have. . . . It is something you have been given (Dentist, male, age 55).

Humility was further demonstrated when participants were asked to rate themselves on a spirit at work scale. Although participants were passionate about their work, most were hesitant to rate themselves as a 10 (the highest rating). The ratings ranged from seven to ten and were followed by comments like, "no one wants to brag," "I wouldn't want to be egotistical," and "I take a moderation kind of view."

A reflective nature, questing for meaning and purpose, purposiveness beyond self, consciousness, and a sense of gratitude and humility portrayed by participants who experienced high levels of spirit at work support the argument that spiritual inclination was a personality characteristic of these individuals.

Discussion

These findings paint a distinct personality portrait of individuals with high levels of spirit at work. The profile resembles one of persons who are well adjusted, healthy, and self-actualized. Their personalities are characterized by: (a) inner harmony, (b) positive energy, (c) self-transcendence, (d) conscientiousness, (e) openness to possibilities, and (f) spiritual inclination. The findings suggest that these six traits combine to form a personality profile I have labelled "the integrated self."

The Integrated Self: A Spirit at Work Personality Profile

As do the paths to spirit at work (Kinjerski, 2004), the integrated self personality profile also seems to fit participants of differing ages, gender, education, socio-economic status, and type of work. A review of the personality profiles of individuals on different paths showed that the profile is characteristic of individuals regardless of their path to spirit at work, thus challenging the notion that spirit at work, for some, may be innate (Kinjerski, 2004). It did not seem to matter that some individuals always experienced spirit at work, whereas for others it was an experience that came together over time or only after a transformative event, and yet for others the experience waxed and waned dependent on the characteristics of their work environment, all participants with high spirit at work shared a similar personality profile.

Although six personality traits emerged, it became apparent that these individuals were so much more than these six traits treated individually. Their essence could only be comprehended as a whole integrated pattern. As such, it was not any one of the personality traits that characterized participants with high levels of spirit at work, but the combination, the integration of them all. This provided the rationale for describing this personality profile as an integrated self. These individuals strived for integration of self at multiple levels: integration of the 'whole self', integration of the past and future, integration of one's private and work life, and integration of their personality characteristics.

One way that integration was evident among individuals with high spirit at work was through their description of authenticity. Participants described themselves as being the same person, all of the time, regardless of whether they were at work or at home. Moreover, they talked about expressing their complete selves, their physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual selves, at work.

At another level, individuals with high spirit at work described a sense of integration that tied the past and present to the future. They described themselves as part of the whole and reported being interested in making a contribution or leaving a legacy that was beyond self. This connection seemed to provide the opportunity to integrate the need to pursue things, which were of personal importance, with self-transcendence.

Yet others described this integration as a coming together of their interests, skills, passion, and for some, their faith. For others, it meant integration between their private and work lives. Participants reported integrating their interests and passions with their day-to-day work.

Finally, individuals with high levels of spirit at work strived for integration of their personality traits, which sometimes are viewed as being in conflict with one another. For example, these participants seemed to have found a way to integrate an achievement striving nature with an equally strong altruistic tendency. Most participants were driven to achieve, but their intention was for the betterment of others. Although they were goal-oriented and focused, they were also reflective and had a tendency to live in the moment. These individuals blended a personal sense of autonomy and responsibility with an ability and desire to work collaboratively. They valued and relied on their training and, at the same time, a majority reported that they valued their intuitive self. Participants had a sense of control, but they also had a tendency to surrender that control and open themselves to new experiences and possibilities. Although it is difficult to represent these complex interactions, Figure 3-8, on the following page, attempts to depict this integration of personality characteristics. The circles at the ends of each similar line are opposites of one another, and yet, integrated in the spirit at work personality.

Unlike other personality models that view personality characteristics as a dichotomy, the spirit at work profile suggests that, for these individuals, the traits are integrated. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) referred to this uniqueness as the "complex self" which is the combination of being differentiated and integrated:

> Complexity is the result of two broad psychological processes: differentiation and integration. Differentiation implies a movement toward uniqueness, toward separating oneself from others. Integration refers to its opposite: a union with other people, with ideas, and entities beyond the self. A complex self is one that succeeds in combining these opposite tendencies (pg. 41).

He goes on to argue for the importance of both differentiation and integration:

> A self that is only differentiated – not integrated – may attain great individual accomplishments, but risks being mired in self-centered egotism. By the same token a person whose self is based exclusively on integration will be connected and secure, but lack autonomous individuality. Only when a person invests equal amounts of psychic energy in these two processes and avoids both selfishness and conformity is the self likely to reflect complexity (pg. 42).

Participants with high levels of spirit at work were clearly differentiated and integrated. Individually, they attained great personal achievement and yet, they were deeply connected with others and to a purpose beyond self.

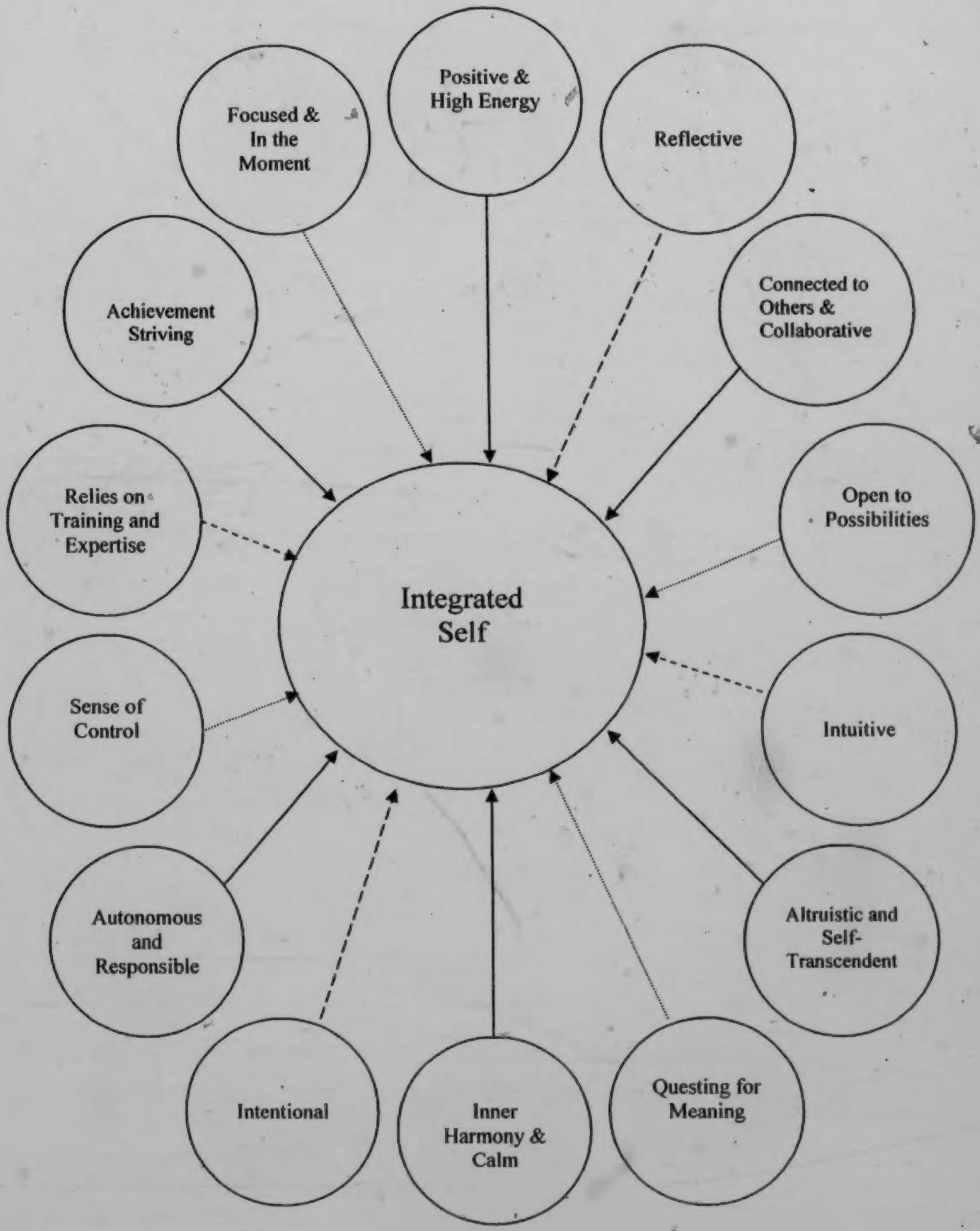
Positive & High Energy
Focused & In the Moment
Reflective
Achievement Striving
Connected to Others & Collaborative
Relies on Training and Expertise
Open to Possibilities
Integrated Self
Sense of Control
Intuitive
Autonomous and Responsible
Altruistic and Self-Transcendent
Intentional
Inner Harmony & Calm
Questing for Meaning

Figure 3-8. The Integrated Self Personality

The Integrated Personality Profile and Other Personality Theories

Whereas the personality profile of persons with high spirit at work shares many commonalities with other personality profiles associated with such constructs as the self-actualized person (Maslow, 1968, 1970), individuals who had peak experiences (Maslow, 1968), individuals who experience flow or optimal experiences (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), and persons high on emotional (Goleman, 1998) and spiritual intelligence (Emmons, 1999), the spirit at work profile has particular traits that differentiate it from these descriptions. A discussion of the similarities and differences between the spirit at work profile and the personality characteristics of similar constructs follows.

Spirit at Work and Self-Actualization. These results revealed many similarities between the integrated spirit at work personality profile and the reported personality characteristics of self-actualized individuals. Both profiles indicated a sense of inner harmony and integration, passion and enthusiasm, interconnectedness and self-transcendence, openness to possibilities and creativity, and authenticity. Whereas the intention of individuals high on spirit at work was always to contribute to the higher good of society; the ultimate focus of the self-actualized person was the actualization of their own potentiality, which may or may not be manifested through achievement of a purpose or cause beyond self. Consequently, a self-actualized person may be dedicated to his or her own personal growth or achievement. For example, a self-actualized athlete may be driven by personal achievement, whereas an athlete high on spirit at work would likely be striving for a similar personal achievement, but with the intent to make a contribution, perhaps to best represent his country. Moreover, those self-actualized individuals who are dedicated to something beyond self may fulfill that dedication through means other than work, whereas individuals high on spirit at work fulfill, at least part of, their mission through work.

Spirit at Work and Peak Experiences. Whereas anyone can have a peak experience, self actualized individuals are more likely to have them than those who are not self-actualized (Maslow, 1968). So given the previously described link between spirit at work and self actualization, it was not surprising to find similarities in personality between persons who have experienced peak experiences and those who were high on spirit at work as well. It may be that the defining moments as described by Kinjerski (2004) and experienced by individuals high on spirit at work are indeed peak experiences, thus contributing to the commonality between the two personality profiles. Common personality characteristics of persons who have peak experiences and those who experience spirit at work included inner harmony, transcendence, and spiritual inclination. Like self-actualization, however, peak experiences do not have to occur in a work context. Furthermore, peak experiences tend to be brief and intense, whereas spirit at work tends to build and deepen over time. During the moment of a peak experience, Maslow (1968) suggested that, in some ways, the individual is a different person, whereas individuals high on spirit at work report a tendency to be the same person all of the time. Peak experiences seem to be an aspect of spirit at work, but it is less complex a concept than spirit at work.

Spirit at Work and Flow. Similar to Maslow's (1968) concept of peak experience, flow is characterized as a merging of action and awareness. Flow is defined as the experience of optimal fulfillment and engagement and people are said to enter into a "flow state" when they are fully absorbed in activity during which they lose their sense of time and have feelings of great satisfaction (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). As expected, several parallels existed between the integrated spirit at work personality profile and the characteristics of individuals reporting a flow experience. Characteristics common to both include positive energy, sense of inner harmony, conscientiousness, and spiritual inclination, and to some extent, an openness to possibilities. What seems to differentiate the two is the "self-transcendent" facet included in the spirit at work profile. Although a person in flow state tends to transcend the sense of self, the experience seems to be one of a mystical nature and does not necessarily involve being altruistic or making a contribution towards others. Moreover, although flow is most often associated with work (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989), it does occur in leisure activities as well.

Spirit at Work and Emotional Intelligence. The integrated spirit at work personality profile was seen to share several characteristics with the profile of individuals high on emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998). The inner harmony and positive energy facets of the integrated personality profile was seen to be similar to the intrapersonal, stress management, and general mood facets of emotional intelligence; the self-transcendent trait with the interpersonal dimension; the openness to possibilities characteristic with the adaptability competency; and to a lesser extent, the conscientiousness factor with the intrapersonal competency of emotional intelligence. The spiritual inclination trait of individuals with a spirit at work personality profile seems to differentiate the spirit at work personality profile from the profile of those persons high on emotional intelligence. Nevertheless, it may be that individuals with high spirit at work are also high on emotional intelligence.

Spirit at Work and Spiritual Intelligence. Although the concept of spiritual intelligence, that is, the ability or capacity to have spiritual or mystical experiences, is emergent, the self-transcendent, openness to possibilities, and spiritual inclination traits of persons with high levels of spirit at work seem to be very consistent with Emmons' (1999) characterization of spiritually intelligent individuals. Emmons (1999) proposes that spiritually intelligent persons have the capacity to transcend self, to experience heightened consciousness, to sanctify everyday experiences, to utilize spiritual resources, and to be virtuous. Whereas the concept of spiritual intelligence focuses on the capacity for spiritual experiences, persons with a spirit at work personality profile are self-transcendent, highly conscious, and open to guidance. They engage in virtuous behaviours, they engage in a process of discernment and reflexivity, they are purposive beyond self and they see the poetry in everyday life. Perhaps individuals with a spirit at work integrated personality profile exemplify spiritual intelligence.

Many similarities seemed to exist among the personality profiles of persons high on spirit at work and those self-actualized individuals, those who have had peak or optimal experiences, and persons high on emotional and spiritual intelligence. It may be that persons who score high on the characteristics of a spirit at work profile have a tendency towards self-actualization, peak experiences, optimal experiences, and emotional and spiritual intelligence that is experienced in a work context. Individuals with these particular profiles have a propensity towards inner harmony, positive energy, openness to possibilities, and conscientiousness. Self-transcendence was a trait found in the majority of these profiles, but it was often viewed as transcendence of ego and did not necessarily translate to an emphasis on serving others, or serving others through work. Finally, many of the profiles include a trait that reflects spiritual inclination.

In teasing out the differences, however, it appears that what differentiates these personality profiles from the integrated spirit at work profile is the *conscious intention* of persons with high spirit at work. These persons demonstrated a consciousness about how they lived their lives. They reported having clarity about their life purpose and the intention and direction of their work. They described being mindful and intentional about achieving their purpose and goals and made conscious choices that directed their lives, including their work lives, toward contributing to the common good.

Further research is required to more fully demonstrate the similarities and differences among the integrated spirit at work personality profile and other personality constructs and to determine if each of these constructs actually reflects separate personality profiles. It may be that all of these personality dimensions come together to form the integrated spirit at work personality profile within the context of work.

Spirit at Work Profile and the Big Five Factor Model of Personality. After the emergence of the six personality factors in my work, I was struck by the parallel of the integrated spirit at work personality profile with the Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality (McCrae & Costa, 1999), with one important exception. Focusing on a core set of behavioural traits, the Big-Five model offers a reliable and valid framework to understand personality, making it a useful tool to compare the spirit at work profile. Numerous personality experts have concluded that individuals can be understood by knowing the extent to which persons exhibit each of five traits: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism (and Emotional Stability), and Openness to Experience (McCrae & Costa, 1991).

Although I describe or group some traits differently than McRae and Costa's descriptions, the parallels between the FFM of personality and the integrated spirit at work profile are obvious. A detailed comparison between the two is found in Appendix 1. Inner Harmony compares with Emotional Stability (Neuroticism), Positive Energy is similar to Extraversion, Self-transcendence relates to Agreeableness, Conscientiousness to Conscientiousness, and Open to Possibilities to Openness to Experience. With the exception of the Extraversion and Neuroticism scales, individuals with high spirit at work would expect to rate high on all factors of the FFM. With respect to the Extraversion facet, it is suspected that they would fall into what some call the "Ambivert" classification as opposed to introvert or extrovert, indicating an ability to move back and forth between introversion and extraversion. Finally, individuals with high spirit at work would rate low on the Neuroticism facet. Overall, this points to a profile of a well adjusted individual.

The personality facets that emerged for persons experiencing high spirit at work were similar to the Big Five facets, with one exception. What is left unexplained by the Five Factor Model of personality is the tendency of individuals with high spirit at work towards a spiritual inclination. These participants reported: engaging in an ongoing process of discernment and reflection, a quest for meaning and purpose, purposiveness beyond self, a sense of gratitude and humility, and a higher consciousness. Although MacDonald (2000) notes that the FFM relates to spirituality in highly specific ways, for example, Cognitive Orientation towards Spirituality and Religiousness relate with

Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness and Existential Well-Being is strongly and inversely related to Neuroticism, he demonstrated that the Five Factor Model of personality is incomplete, in that it lacks a domain which addresses spirituality. Others (Piedmont, 2001) have demonstrated that spiritual transcendence is independent of measures of the FFM and have suggested a personality model that includes spirituality as a specific factor, for example, a Self-Transcendence dimension (Cloninger, Svrakic, & Pryzbeck, 1993).

Not surprisingly, the spiritual inclination dimension emerged as a key facet in the spirit at work profile. In particular, the higher consciousness and intentionality demonstrated by persons with high spirit at work seemed to differentiate the spirit at work personality profile from other similar constructs. The findings of this study give support to the argument that spirituality is the personality dimension that makes people's experience of spirit at work unique. It could very well be the Spiritual Inclination dimension that helps personality characteristics, which seem to be contradictory, come together, thus shaping the integrated self. Moreover, it may be that the inclination towards spirituality is what fosters individual transformation and spirit at work. A strong connection with something larger than self, that quest for meaning, the sense of purpose beyond self, and self-transcendent nature of those with a disposition towards spirit at work may make the difference.

In addition to the Spiritual Inclination dimension, it seems that the most significant difference between the spirit at work personality profile and the Five Factor Model of personality, overall, relates to the perception about the capacity for change in personality and transformation. For the most part, personality theorists contend that personality traits develop through childhood and reach maturity in adulthood, around age 30, remaining stable thereafter (McCrae & Costa, 1999). Emotional intelligence is reported to peak around age 50 before levelling off (Steiner, 2000). On the other hand, spirituality is seen to be changing and developing over one's life span (Emmons, 1999; Piedmont, 2001). Perhaps it is the Spiritual Inclination dimension that can be influenced through cognitive and behavioural change, thereby fostering spirit at work at any age.

Conclusion

The findings of this study are suggestive of a "spirit at work" personality profile for persons reporting high spirit at work. The spirit at work profile consists of six dimensions: inner harmony, positive energy, self-transcendence, conscientiousness, openness to possibilities and spiritual inclination that blend together to form the "integrated personality." Several similarities were shown to exist between the spirit at work profile and personality concepts such as self-actualization, peak experience, flow, emotional and spiritual intelligence and the Big Five Factor model of personality. Except for the concept of spiritual intelligence, what seemed to differentiate most of these concepts was the spiritual inclination dimension of the spirit at work profile. In particular, it may be the higher consciousness and intentionality of those individuals with high spirit at work that differentiate them from persons who do not experience spirit at work. Moreover, because spirituality is seen to develop over one's life span, it is suggested that the experience of spirit at work can be fostered at anytime.

Personality traits can assist with understanding of individual differences, but they are insufficient for fully understanding how one comes to develop spirit at work. Although participants in this study shared a common personality profile, Kinjerski (2004) demonstrated that they took different paths to the experience of spirit at work. These experiences suggest that, in addition to personality characteristics, spirit at work is influenced by other factors, such as life events and the work environment. An ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Westney, Brabble, & Edwards, 1988) would suggest that spirit at work is not determined by either personality or working environment, but as the interaction of the individual, including their behaviour, and environment. Some people might have the potential to experience spirit at work through the possession of personality characteristics and even engage in behaviours that enable them to experience spirit at work whereas others might not. Similarly, some life experiences and work environments facilitate the experience, whereas others hinder it. This interrelationship between personality, individual behaviours, and the organizational context is considered fundamental to the creation of spirit at work and should be further explored.

It is hoped that the emergence of a spirit at work personality profile will stimulate research that will: (a) validate the spirit at work personality dimensions with a larger sample, (b) determine and compare the personality profile of individuals with high spirit at work with individuals with low spirit at work (c) test for similarities and differences between the spirit at work personality profile and that represented by similar personality concepts, (d) explore the influence of other factors such as individual behaviours and organizational features on the experience of spirit at work, and finally, (e) establish the relationship, if any, between a spirit at work personality and personal wellbeing and productivity.

References

Ashmos, D., & Duchon, D. (2000). Spirituality at work. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 9* (2), 134-145.

Bar-On, R., & Parker, J.D.A. (2000). *Handbook of emotional intelligence.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cavanagh, G.F. (1999). Spirituality for managers: Context and critique. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 12* (3), 186-199.

Charmaz, K. (2000). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In N. Denzin & Y. Linclon (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 509-535). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Cherniss, C. (2000). *Emotional Intelligence: What it is and why it matters.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Industrial and organizational Psychology, New Orleans, LA.

Cloninger, C.R., Svrakic, D.M., & Pryzbeck, T.R. (1993). A psychological model of temperament and character. *Archives of General Psychiatry, 50,* 975-990.

Corbin, J. (1986). Qualitative data analyses for grounded theory. In W.C. Chenitz & J.M. Swanson (Eds.), *From practice to grounded theory: Qualitative research in nursing.* Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1988). The flow experience and its significance for human psychology. In M. Csikszentmihalyi & I.S. Csikszentmihalyi (Eds.), *Optimal experience: Psychological studies of flow in consciousness* (pp.15-35). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience.* New York: Harper and Row.

Csikszentmihalyi, M., & LeFevre, J. (1989). Optimal experience in work and leisure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 56,* 5, 815-822.

Emmons, R.A. (1999). Religion in the psychology of personality: An introduction. *Journal of Personality, 67,* 6, 873-888.

Emmons, R.A. (2000). Is spirituality an intelligence? Motivation, cognition, and the psychology of ultimate concern. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 10,* 1, 3-26.

Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence.* New York: Bantam Books.

Hurtz, G.M., & Donovon, J.J. (2000). Personality and job performance: The big five revisited. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 85,* 6, 869-879.

Jacobson, S. (1994). *Spirituality and transformational leadership in secular setting: A Delphi study.* (An abridgement of an unpublished dissertation). Seattle University.

Kinjerski, V. (2004). Four paths to spirit at work: How one develops spirit at work. *Exploring spirit at work: The interconnectedness of personality, personal actions, organizational features and the paths to spirit at work.* Unpublished paper in Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Alberta.

Kinjerski, V.M., & Skrypnek, B. (2004). Defining spirit at work: Finding common ground. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 17,* 26-42.

Korac-Kakabadse, N., Kouzmin, A. & Kakabadse, A. (2002). Spirituality and leadership praxis. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 17,* 3, 165-182.

Kotter, J.P., & Heskett, J.L. (1992). *Corporate culture and performance.* New York: Free Press.

Krishnakumar, S., & Neck, C.P. (2002). The "what" "why" and "how" of spirituality in the workplace. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 17,* 3, 153-64.

MacDonald, D.A. (2000). Spirituality: Description, measurement, and relation to the five factor model of personality. *Journal of Personality, 68,* 1, 153-197.

Maslow, A.H. (1968). *Toward a psychology of being (2^{nd} ed.)* Princeton: D. Van Nostrand.

Maslow, A.H. (1970). *Religions, values, and peak experiences.* New York: Viking.

Maslow, A.H. (1971). *The farther reaches of human nature.* New York: Penguin Books.

Mathes, E., Zevon, M., Roter, P., & Joeger, S. (1982). Peak experience tendencies: Scale development and theory testing. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 22,* 3, 92-108.

McCrae, R.R., & Costa, P.T., Jr. (1999). A five-factor theory of personality. In L.A. Pervin & O.P. John (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (2nd ed., pp. 139-153). New York: Guilford.

McCrae, R.R., & Costa, P.T., Jr. (1991). The NEO personality inventory: Using the five-factor model in counselling. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 69,* 367-372.

Mitroff, I., & Denton, E. (1999). A study of spirituality in the workplace. *Sloan Management Review, 40*(4), 83-92.

Neck, C., & Milliman, J. (1994). Thought self-leadership: Finding spiritual fulfillment in organizational life. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 9* (6), 9-16.

Paulison, G.L. (2001). *Leadership and spirituality: Relationship of spirituality factors to personality preferences of management.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Phoenix.

Piedmont, R.L. (2001). Spiritual transcendence and the scientific study of spirituality. *Journal of Rehabilitation, 67,* 1, 11 pg.

Steiner, S.J. (2000). *The EQ edge: Emotional intelligence and your success.* Toronto: Stoddart.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1994). Grounded theory methodology: An overview. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 273-285). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Thorne, F.C. (1963). The clinical use of peak and nadir experience reports. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 19,* 248-250.

Tischler, L., Biberman, J., & McKeage, R. (2002). Linking emotional intelligence, spirituality and workplace performance: Definitions, models and ideas for research, *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 17,* 3, 203-18.

Wuthnow, R. (1978). Peak experiences: Some empirical tests. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 18,* 3, 59-75.

Westney, O., Brabble, E., & Edwards, C. (1988). Human ecology: Concepts and perspectives. In R. J. Borden & J. Jacobs (Eds.), *Human ecology: Research and applications* (pp. 129-137). College Park, MD: Society for Human Ecology.

Appendix I
Comparison of Spirit at Work Facets with FFM of Personality[1]

Spirit at Work Dimensions	Spirit at Work Facet (and suggested trait adjective)	Big Five Dimensions	Big Five Facet (and correlated trait adjective)
Inner Harmony	Calm (peaceful) Secure and self aware (self-acceptance) Integrated (balanced)	Neuroticism versus emotional stability	Anxiety (tense) Angry hostility (irritable) Depression (not contented) Self-consciousness (shy) Impulsiveness (moody) Vulnerability (not self-confident)
Positive Energy	Positive Emotions (happy) Enthusiastic (passionate) Perseverant (active)	Extraversion versus introversion	Gregariousness (sociable) Assertiveness (forceful) Activity (energetic) Excitement-seeking (adventurous) Positive Emotions (enthusiasm) Warmth (outgoing)
Self-Transcendence	Interconnected (deep connection) Congenial and respectful (friendly, gracious) Compassionate (empathic) Altruistic (helping others)	Agreeableness versus antagonism	Trust(forgiving) Straightforwardness (not demanding) Altruism (warm) Compliance (not stubborn) Modesty (not show-off) Tender-mindedness (sympathetic)

---

[1] As described in Costa and McCrae's (1992) NEO PI-R Facets

Spirit at Work Dimensions	Spirit at Work Facet (and suggested trait adjective)	Big Five Dimensions	Big Five Facet (and correlated trait adjective)
Conscientiousness	Ethical (integrity) Achievement striving (goal-oriented) Inner directed (self-determined) Aware of Capacity (competent and responsible)	Conscientiousness versus lack of direction	Competence (efficient) Order (organized) Dutifulness (not careless) Achievement striving (thorough) Self-disciplined (not lazy) Deliberation (not impulsive)
Openness to Possibilities	Open to guidance (intuitive) Flexible (open to change) Creative (innovative) Intellectual curiosity	Openness versus closedness to experience	Ideas (curious) Fantasy (imaginative) Aesthetics (artistic) Actions (wide interest) Feelings (excitable) Values (unconventional)
Spiritual Inclination	Reflective (discerning) Purposive beyond Self (mission) Questing for Meaning and Purpose (existential meaning) Consciousness (intentionality) Gratitude and Humility (thankful, modest)		

Fostering Spirit at Work: A Shared Responsibility

Enticed by the notion that the integration of spirituality and work leads to positive outcomes for both the individual and organization, employers are looking for ways to cultivate spirit at work (Benefiel, 2003; Cacloppe, 2000; Groen, 2003; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). The term spirit at work is used to describe the experience of individuals who are passionate about and energized by their work. These individuals find their work meaningful and purposeful and report a deep connection with others at work (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004). At the organizational level, spirit at work is also used to describe a work environment that fosters autonomy, trust, cohesiveness, support, recognition, innovation and fairness (Gibbons, 1999; Guillory, 2000; Izzo & Klein, 1998; Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Efforts at fostering spirit at work thus far have focused on the organizational level, emphasizing leadership and work processes. As of yet, little attention has been given to spirit at work at the individual level.

Definitions of Spirit at Work

Gibbons (1999) has described spirit at work as "a journey toward integration of work and spirituality, for individuals and organizations, which provides direction, wholeness and connectedness at work" (p. 6). However, no single definition of the construct has emerged in the literature. Sometimes spirit at work is used to refer to characteristics at the organizational level (Izzo & Klein, 1998), sometimes at the individual level (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004) and at other times it refers to both levels (Gibbons, 1999; Guillory, 2000). This section will review the literature that has comprised the definitional legacy of the concept to date.

Organizational Spirit at Work

Although a comprehensive definition has not yet been adopted by all researchers in this area, organizational spirit at work is generally used to refer to a workplace culture where humanistic principles, practices and workplace behaviours are integrated with sound business functioning (Guillory, 2000). Izzo and Klein (1998) refer to it as "corporate soul." Along with an emphasis on sound business functioning, elements of an organization with corporate soul or high spirit at work includes an organizational vision and values that reflect a higher purpose, a positive organizational climate, a particular leadership style, and a sense of community and common purpose among employees (Gibbons, 1999; Guillory, 2000; Izzo & Klein, 1998; Mitroff & Denton, 1999).

Individual-Centered Spirit at Work

At the individual level, spirit at work refers to the desire of employees to express all aspects of their being at work and to be engaged in meaningful work. For example, at the individual level, spirit at work is described as "the recognition that employees have an inner life that is nourished by meaningful work, which takes place in the context of community" (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, p.137). It is said to be evident where employees can express their full creativity, emotions, and intelligence (Mitroff & Denton, 1999), and find opportunities to express many aspects of their being, not only the ability to perform physical or intellectual tasks (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Spirit at work at the individual level is said to be the integration of one's spirituality with his or her work (Gibbons, 1999).

These definitions, although sharing common features, tend to be hypothetical and not based upon research data. However, some research is currently underway. For example, based on interviews and surveys with persons experiencing spirit at work, Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2004) found that individual spirit at work reflects a distinct state that involves profound feelings of wellbeing, a belief that one's work makes a contribution, a sense of connection to others and common purpose, an awareness of a connection to something larger than self, and a sense of perfection and transcendence. This delineation between individual and organizational spirit at work, and in particular, the research based definition of individual spirit at work, enables the examination of individual-oriented spirit at work: what it is, how it develops, how it is cultivated, and the impact of such an experience.

The Changing Nature of Work

Over the past 50 years there have been profound changes in the nature and meaning of work to individuals in industrialized societies. This transition has led to work environments that are shifting and uncertain rather than stable and predictable, thus impacting employee wellbeing. A discussion of these changes and their impact follows.

In the last 40 years, the education level of employees has increased considerably and the advent of the information age has required employees to develop a new skill set (Betcherman & Lowe, 1997). The move from women holding unpaid roles in the home to that of primary workers outside the home has been a key influence in today's work environment (Fast & Skrypnek, 1994; HRDC, 1997). Issues such as work-family balance have become more prevalent as women have carried out both work and family roles (Betcherman & Lowe, 1997; Duxbury & Higgins, 2002; Skrypnek & Fast, 1996).

More recently, the last decade has witnessed significant structural changes in the work environment, resulting in diverse work experiences for different cohorts.

Organizational commitment to long-term employment is not as prevalent as in previous decades, thus reducing employee loyalty (Duxbury & Higgins, 2002; HRDC, 1997). Employees in an earlier career stage can now expect to have several jobs over their working life as compared with those who are approaching retirement (HRDC, 1997). In Canada, by 1997, self-employment grew to 18 per cent of total employment (HRDC, 1997). Non-standard employment, described as a shift away from full-time work (Betcherman & Lowe, 1997), has accounted for a significant increase of total employment growth (HRDC, 1997) and has had a major impact on the experience of work. Currently, less than half of all Canadian employees have employer-sponsored pension plans (Betcherman & Lowe, 1997). Further, the structural changes, such as the ability to work from home, produced by globalization and computer technology that occurred in the 1990s are unprecedented (HRDC, 1997). Changes such as these have altered the nature and meaning of work and have had a detrimental impact on employees.

The recent trends towards organizational downsizing and restructuring have negatively impacted employee morale and loyalty (Caudron, 1997). Work-life conflict has increased markedly over the 1990s as employees are working longer hours and often bringing work home (Duxbury & Higgins, 2002). The well-being of employees has declined; they are more stressed, their physical and mental health is poorer, they are increasingly more absent from work and their satisfaction with life and work has decreased. In addition to the stress on the family, work-life conflict has a negative impact on organizational performance and results in less commitment to the employer (Duxbury & Higgins, 2002).

It is believed that this changing work environment and lack of commitment from employers along with the resulting employee stress and decreased productivity has caused a spiritual crisis for some employees. A growing body of literature points to an enhanced spirit at work as a possible antidote to the increasing sense of spiritual disorientation and decreased productivity in the workplace.

Organizational Response to Changing Nature of Work

Employers are recognizing that the changing nature of work requires a new employee contract. In order for organizations to be successful, some assert that the shift from the information age to the knowledge age requires employees to be committed to and passionate about their work (Fairholm, 1997; Moxley, 2000; Secretan, 1997). Thus, they argue for workplace cultures, leadership, and work processes that foster such commitment and passion (Fairholm, 1997; Jacobson, 1994; Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Supporting this view, Lieber (1998) found that the top 100 Best Companies in the United States (as rated by employee satisfaction and financial performance) shared three traits: visionary and inspiring leadership, physical work environments with amenities to support employees, and a sense of purpose among employees. In many of these companies, work was regarded by employees as part of a deep and rewarding purpose in life.

Although research evidence about the effectiveness of employee friendly policies and practices is just beginning to emerge, many successful organizations are integrating spirituality into human resource and organizational development programs. For example, Boatmen's First National Bank, the Bank of Montreal and Exxon have been incorporating a spiritual component in their training programs for some time (Brandt, 1996). In 1982, Exxon introduced a "whole person" model as well as a process for employees to explore how to work consciously at higher levels. Later, they introduced a course which helped people link their purpose, principles, and values to personal and work goals (Leigh, 1997). Some organizations, like Tom's of Maine (Brandt, 1996) and Ceridan (Leigh, 1997), are based on spiritual values, whereas The Body Shop, Mountain Equipment Coop, and Harley Davidson reported combining the profit motive with the values of social responsibility and meaningful work. It was a combination of a shared vision, continuous learning, and participatory decision making that transformed Harley Davidson from a company that was facing bankruptcy to one that became profitable (Cacioppe, 2000). Some companies are writing vision statements not only to provide business direction, but to inspire employees to be committed to a worthy purpose. In addition, others like WalMart, 3M Corporation, and Proctor and Gamble are assisting employees to identify, and then align their personal vision for the company with the organization's vision (Cacioppe, 1998). Recognizing the value of spiritual energy in the workplace, Boeing and Xerox, Fortune 500 companies, have hired consultants to cultivate the spiritual energies of their staff (Harrington, Preziosi, & Gooden, 2001). Although the effectiveness of these programs may not be known, the success of these organizations is well documented, so an assumption is being made that the integration of spirituality into the workplace goes hand in hand with successful organizations.

Benefits of Spirit at Work

Research is beginning to establish a relationship between the presence of spirit at work, particularly the integration of spirituality and work at the organizational level, and employee wellness as well as organizational performance. Based on inference and some empirical data, spirit at work is reported to add meaning to one's life, enhance one's creativity, and increase one's commitment to and enthusiasm for work (Fairholm, 1997; Groen, 2003; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002; Leigh, 1997; Milliman, Ferguson, Trickett, & Condemi, 1999; Moxley, 2000). Moreover, the development of spirituality in the workplace is linked with increased morale (Leigh, 1997), a sense of community within and beyond the workplace (Groen, 2003), increased honesty and trust in the organization, and an enhanced sense of personal fulfillment of employees (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002).

Examination of the 100 best companies to work for in America revealed happy employees and a link between a highly satisfied workforce and organizational financial performance (Grant, 1998). More specifically, a relationship has been found between spirit at work at the organizational level and increased organizational performance (Leigh, 1997; Neck & Milliman, 1994) including higher profits and success (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). For example, in the ranking of the top 100 companies, Grant (1998) found that four attitudes, taken together, correlated with higher profits. The attitudes included the feeling by employees that they were given opportunities to perform their best, the sense of a direct connection between their work and the company's mission, the belief that their opinions count, and the feeling that their colleagues were also committed to quality work. The emergence of data to support the relationship between qualities of spirit at work and organizational success as well as individual wellbeing has led to the promotion of spirit at work by some organizations.

Characteristics of Workplace Spirituality that Foster Individual Spirit at Work

Although research suggests that individuals as well as organizations benefit from high levels of spirit at work, most interventions thus far have focused on fostering spirit at work at the organizational level. However, those characteristics that enhance organizational spirit at work or workplace spirituality may very well be the same factors that contribute to the experience of individual spirit at work.

For example, leadership has been identified as being the most influential factor in fostering organizational spirit at work (Moxley, 2000). Thus, a majority of research regarding workplace spirituality has focused on the relationship between leadership and spirituality (Cavanagh, 1999; Fairholm, 1996; Jacobson, 1994; Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, & Kakabadse, 2002; Neck & Milliman, 1994; Paulison, 2001). Based on the observation of successful organizations, Fairholm (1996) posits that leadership is being refined in terms of service and stewardship rather than just the ability to direct action. He argues that spiritual leaders are moral leaders that focus on service to others, practice steward leadership, and create cooperative, action-oriented communities (Fairholm, 1996).

Building on Fairholm's work, Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, and Kakabadse (2002) identify eight elements of spiritual leadership: building shared values, setting a common vision, creating shared meaning, enabling growth and transformation, helping followers to feel powerful and influential, following intuition to produce real change that matters, committing to service and servant leadership, and transforming of selves, others, and their organizations. Because many of these characteristics, for example, shared values and a common vision, a sense of empowerment, and a commitment to service and transformation, are consistent with the concept of spirit at work, it is expected that spiritual leadership will foster individual spirit at work.

How One Comes to Experience Individual Spirit at Work

Persons with high spirit at work are well adjusted individuals, characterized by a sense of inner harmony, positive energy, conscientiousness, self-transcendence, an openness to possibilities, and a spiritual inclination (Kinjerski, 2004b). Although participants shared a similar spirit at work profile, Kinjerski found that they did not develop spirit at work in the same way. Factors other than personality apparently had an effect on their development of high levels of spirit at work.

The experience of spirit at work is seen as a personal journey (Gibbons, 1999, Kinjerski, 2004a) with individuals taking one of four distinct paths: always there, a coming together, transformative event, and contextually sensitive (Kinjerski, 2004a). Kinjerski's finding that persons with similar personality profiles took diverse paths to spirit at work supports the notion that other factors influence spirit at work. For example, even individuals on the "always there path" indicated that their intensity varied as their experience grew and deepened over time in response to their own actions and the organizational climate within which they worked. Persons on the "coming together path" described their path as a culmination of their life experience, their own actions, and their work environment. In the contextually sensitive path, the experience of spirit at work was influenced by work experiences or organizational factors and thus would come and go. Once lost, the experience of spirit at work was only regained after action was taken to rectify the situation, such as finding a new work environment that fostered spirit at work. The identification of this particular path indicates that having a spirit at work personality profile does not guarantee a continuing spirit at work experience. Finally, it appeared that a person's response to the "transformative event" was more important to their development of spirit at work than the actual event. Based on the identification of paths to spirit at work and past research, it would seem that spirit at work can be fostered by both what the organization does and actions the individual takes.

For example, organizations may provide leadership for spirit at work to emerge or allow for increased intensity; in addition to coping, they can use transformative events as possibilities for positive change and growth; and they can encourage spiritual development and a sense of meaning among employees. The finding that spirit at work generally deepens along the way, even for those individuals who are on the always there path, implies that spirit at work can be nurtured and enhanced. This idea is consistent with Reker and Wong's (1988) theory of existential meaning which posits that meaning can be created through making choices, taking action, and engaging in relationships. This element of intentionality and choice implies that the individual has a key role in the development of spirit at work.

An individual-centered view of spirit at work considers how spirit at work is cultivated from the standpoint of the individual. Experience and research suggest that it may be fostered from an organizational perspective, an individual perspective, or both. An organizational approach would have a more contextual work oriented focus, whereas an individual approach would have a personal – worker – oriented approach. This second view recognizes that organizations are a collection of individuals and that the development of spirit at work begins with the individual.

An understanding of how to cultivate individual-oriented spirit at work is just beginning. It is still unclear, given the existing research, whether individual-centered spirit at work is mainly related to personality factors or environmental factors and whether and how it can be fostered. The role, if any, of internal and external factors in promoting spirit at work is yet to be determined. As part of a larger study which examined the process individuals followed to experience spirit at work, the primary objective of this paper was to detail the factors that foster individual-oriented spirit at work. Thus, the key questions for this part of the study were: What factors foster individual spirit at work? What personal actions promote the experience of spirit at work? What external characteristics encourage and enhance the experience of spirit at work? Finally, what are the benefits and downsides of experiencing spirit at work?

Method

Research Design

Spirit at work is a relatively new concept and thus, still in the exploratory stages. Consequently, the use of qualitative methods to study the factors that foster spirit at work was seen as most appropriate. The determination of these factors requires the exploration of perspectives that are best captured through in-depth, face-to-face discussions.

Sample selection, data collection, and data analysis were informed by a grounded theory perspective (Charmaz, 2000, Strauss & Corbin, 1994, 1998) that focuses on individuals' lived experiences and stories. Grounded theory is a general method, a way of thinking about and conceptualizing data. Grounded in data, this inductive method is used to develop theory which evolves through simultaneous and systematic collection and analysis of that data (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Grounded theory is particularly useful in areas lacking previous theoretical development and offers a means of exploring issues when data are not readily quantified (Corbin, 1986).

Participants

Individuals experiencing high levels of spirit at work were identified through purposive sampling. Potential research participants were either known to the researcher, identified based on referrals, or identified from published stories in local newspapers about positive work experiences. Of this group, 15 individuals were interviewed, but only 13 individuals with self-identified high levels of spirit at work who were in paid full-time employment were included in the final data analysis.

Thirteen individuals (10 females and 3 males) ranging in age from 26 to 81 years participated in the study. Twelve participants were Caucasian and one person was Aboriginal. The vast majority of participants were married or living common-law (n=10), three were widowed or divorced. Their highest level of education included a high school diploma (n=2), apprenticeship or special training (n=3), a 2-year diploma (n=2), an undergraduate degree (n=2), or a graduate or professional degree (n=4).
Six participants were self-employed, heads of professional corporations, or both, and seven were employees working in organizations ranging from small businesses and not-for-profit agencies to large bureaucracies. Occupations represented included: administrative assistant, dentist, educator, hairdresser, landscape designer, medical doctor, organizational consultant, parking attendant, physiotherapist, police officer, professor, real estate agent, and receptionist. All participants worked full-time, working from 30 to 80 hours per week. Participants reported a range of income. Six participants reported incomes between $25,000 and $50,000, three reported incomes from $50,000 to $100,000, and four reported incomes over $100,000.

Ethical Considerations

This study received approval from the Human Ethics Review Board in the Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry, and Human Ecology at the University of Alberta. Complying with the guidelines, participants were informed about the nature of the study prior to and again in the first interview before agreeing to participate and giving written consent to use their data. Participants were aware that their involvement was voluntary, that they could decide to withdraw at any time, and that they could decide against having their story included in the study. None of the participants exercised this option. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. Participants were immediately given pseudonyms and all identifying information was removed from the transcripts. Audio-tapes are stored separately from the consents and will be erased upon completion of my degree.

Data Collection

Data were collected through in-depth and reflective interviews that lasted from one and one-half to two hours. Each of the 14 participants was interviewed once. Interviews were conducted in environments that were most convenient and comfortable for the participants, often in their home or office. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by me, the researcher. Demographic information was collected in the beginning of the interview. Hand-written notes of key points were made and explored further with the participant during the interview. As soon after the interview as possible, I wrote a memo outlining my reactions and thoughts about the interview and the data collected.

This research is part of a larger study undertaken to determine how persons come to experience spirit at work (see Kinjerski, 2004a, for a complete list of questions). For this paper, participants were asked to identify personal and external factors that fostered and impeded their experience of spirit at work. Individual's experience of work over time was explored, with a focus on when the experience was strongest, was not present, and the reasons for the change. This was followed by a question about the perceived benefits of spirit at work and any potential downsides of such an experience. Finally, participants were asked to identify three wishes that would enhance their spirit at work and what advice they would share with others interested in promoting spirit at work.

Data Analysis

A grounded theory framework (Charmaz, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1994) informed data analysis. In accordance with the emergent nature of grounded theory methods, data analysis was ongoing and concurrent with data collection, but became more refined as linkages among concepts emerged (Strauss & Corbin, 1994).

I first transcribed and then read the interviews to get an overview of individual responses. I then re-read the interviews and assigned descriptive, first level codes according to how participants described factors that fostered their experience of spirit at work as well as the consequences of spirit at work. Factors that fostered spirit at work immediately began to separate into internal (personal) and external (organizational) aspects. Differentiating between individual and organizational factors, I again reviewed the transcripts and first level codes were assigned to individual factors that fostered spirit at work. Special attention was given to the factors that were identified when the experience was strongest or not present. The initial codes that appeared frequently were grouped into themes. Quotes supporting these initial codes were documented and grouped according to the emerging themes and analytical categories and frameworks from themes emerged. Constant comparison enabled the linking of categories into a coherent framework. Coding and themes were considered by a senior researcher who had read each of the transcripts. The categories were reviewed and reworked until all coded data fit into the identified themes and agreement was obtained between the two researchers. The same process was followed to ascertain the organizational factors that fostered spirit at work and the consequences of spirit at work.

Several strategies that are congruent with qualitative research were used to establish trustworthiness of the study. Memo writing, which involves a written record of analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), was used to assist the transformation from working with data to concepts and to continually reflect on the research process and data analysis. The coding frame, based on emergent themes, was continually reviewed with another researcher. These themes were reworked until agreement between the two researchers was achieved and all coded data fit the categories. Ongoing member checking throughout the interview as well as verification of emerging themes with subsequent participants strengthened the confirmability of the study.

Findings

Two main themes related to factors that enhance spirit at work were consistently identified across all interviews and served as the two organizing constructs for the analyses. These two themes were the personal actions of the individual and organizational factors that fostered their experience of spirit at work. Regardless of the factors that fostered spirit at work, the participants indicated that individuals with spirit at work, their customers, and the organizations they worked for shared in the benefits.

Personal Actions that Fostered Spirit at Work

The first set of themes centered on the individual's personal behaviours. Data analysis revealed four ways participants cultivated spirit at work: *living purposely and consciously, cultivating a spiritual life, appreciating self and others, and refilling the cup.* Although there may be some overlap among these categories, for example, "questing for meaning" is an action that facilitates living purposely and cultivating a spiritual life, they are presented separately to fully explicate the findings. The arrows in Figure 4-1show that each category is related and interacts with other categories.

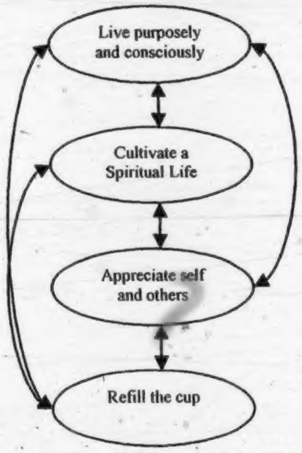
Live purposely and consciously
Cultivate a Spiritual Life
Appreciate self and others
Refill the cup

Figure 4-1. Personal Factors that Foster Spirit at Work

Live Purposely and Consciously

One way that individual behaviours enhanced spirit at work was through participants' choice to live purposely and consciously. This behaviour was illustrated through participants' pursuing self-awareness, living with intention, seeking integration of self, making positive choices, and engaging in transformative action.

Pursue self-awareness. Participants reported that they engaged in a continual process of discernment, reflection and self examination to determine what gave them personal meaning. In this process, they explored their personal values, belief systems, and interests. They sought clarity about their personal mission, life direction, or purpose in life, which was beyond self. Once they determined their passion, participants reported examining how they could live out their passion and, in particular, how their work matched that passion. Noreen shared a process of discernment:

> When you go through a discernment process . . . figuring out what you want to do and what your passions are and how you match your passions with how you can live that out. . . . We listen to the feedback that we are getting from others, so they become a mirror for us. We test out things, try new ideas when we are tempting to give something voice and we hear back about how that is coming across and that helps to direct our path.

On a regular basis, and for some it was daily, participants evaluated the relationship between their day-to-day living and what gave them meaning and made them feel good. Ben suggested that we need to ask ourselves:

> Is what you are doing on a daily basis . . . Is that fulfilling for you? Is it nurturing you? Is it a part of what you want to accomplish in your life? If it is not, then you have to find a way to make it happen or change it completely. I think that is the biggest question. It is the only question, really.

Finally, participants demonstrated that they were mindful of their thoughts and reactions as well as the choices they made.

Live with intention. Participants with high spirit at work reported that they made conscious choices about how they lived and that they chose to live with intention. Ben described his intention towards others:

> It is simple, but, your intention toward somebody is the most important aspect of what you are doing. So your intention is kindness, compassion, you are not there for you, you are there for them . . . That whole intention is part of the spirituality about how I go about things. You find that you can't do it any other way or it will not work for them and it will not work for you, so there is only one way to go about that.

As part of living with intention, participants reported going through a process where they identified concerns or passions that they deemed worthy of commitment. These concerns or passions seemed to be linked to their personal mission or purpose in life, although not all participants described it as such. In the process of living with intention, most individuals reported consciously translating their passion, concerns, or mission into personally defined, valuable, and intrinsically meaningful goals. Personal projects or life tasks that related to these goals were then pursued. In doing so, Karla reported that often, "there has be a giving up of something, a letting go of a certain comfort level, or pleasure to stretch." Rowena observed that her "accelerated moments of growth or periods of growth have been periods of when she was so stretched."

In addition to choosing work that was meaningful, participants shared that they undertook a process of discernment about their specific work or job. They queried the purpose of their work, whom it was to serve and what their particular role was in assisting or impeding that process. Participants reported reminding themselves, on a regular basis, of the positive reasons for doing their specific work.

Seek integration of self. Participants reported practicing integration among all parts of self. In so doing, they chose to live authentically in all dimensions of their life, including work. They advised that living authentically included the expression of their complete selves – physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual selves – at work. Authenticity was so much a part of Kelly, it was even recognized by others:

> My husband sent me a far-side comic one time. It had a bunch of penguins – there is a whole host of penguins and there is this one penguin in the middle with this big sign that says, I've got to be me (*laughs*) and he said "that's you." Yes, I have always been that.

Participants also described functioning in accordance with their inner nature, that is, their values, beliefs, and interests. This sense of alignment, or match, was sought between their personal values, beliefs, and interest and their work. In particular, they sought alignment between their personal goals and that which they viewed as their deeper life purpose. Alignment was also revealed through the connection between participants' career choices and what they identified as meaningful. Karla described the effect of being in alignment:

> There was an element of spirit there because it did feel right to be working in that topic area and working with others, and helping people to come to some decisions for themselves as well. . . . That was something that I felt very connected to and would feel good at the end of the day and would feel that it was a good fit as well.

Make positive choices. Participants with high spirit at work described an awareness of the power of thought and how thoughts affected their lives. As individuals, they reported having a choice about their thoughts. Specifically, they advised that they decided not to have certain thoughts, instead choosing positive thoughts and redirecting those that were negative. Even in less than desirable situations, participants reported making a conscious decision to make the best of each situation. Molly reported:

> I don't have a choice. I have to work. So I think, if you have to work, you might as well be happy at it. You might not always like it, but you may as well make the best of it while you are there and not try to be miserable yourself and make everyone else miserable. . . . I think attitude is everything.

Karla supported this notion about the importance of attitude, "We create our own luck through our attitude and how we see the world."

Along with making positive choices, participants reported practicing having "an intention for the higher good" in all aspects of their life, including work. One's intention for higher good varied. The landscape designer wanted to "create a good feeling," the real estate agent wanted to "bring some happiness," the parking attendant wanted to "make the [building] look a little better," the professor "fosters challenges that are meritorious," and once the physician learned about a new concept, she thought about the benefits and contacted the patients to whom it applied.

Engage in transformative action. Participants reported taking initiative and action to accomplish desired goals and intentions. Most individuals were proactive and demonstrated a "take charge" attitude and "just do it" behaviour. They exemplified openness to new ideas, experiences, and outcomes. For some, this meant surrendering control. For others, it was finding courage to pursue that which was of interest, including a new job or career. For all participants, it was important to be involved in activities that were transformative and that were for the higher good. In doing so, Shelia reframed others' issues as challenges:

> If I was not the type of person that cared about people and was interested in what makes them tick . . . I would see probably those issues that would come to me as problems — as real problems, as frustrating things, . . . unpleasant things that I have to deal with. But I don't see them that way; I see them as challenges: "Here's a way that I can help somebody. This person needs help, okay, now what can I do for him?"

To facilitate transformative action, participants pursued training, skill development, and experiences that fostered fulfillment of goals or intentions. Many participants identified their training as the key factor in their ability to engage in transformative action. The physician asserted that her training "was ultimately the most important thing for her to fall back on" whereas the physiotherapist advised that training "provides you with the basis to complete what your intention is."

The real estate agent's intention was to facilitate successful moves for her clients, so she developed connections with realtors in other cities and was able to refer her clients, thus helping with the transition to the new city. The police officer reported building relationships with others in the community "which helps me in other parts of my job . . . otherwise I won't have any resources when I need people." This ability to develop and access resources was a common occurrence among participants.

These examples support the view that living purposely and consciously cultivated the experience of spirit at work. This was demonstrated by participant's continued pursuit of self-awareness, their choice to live with intention, their endeavour to live an integrated life, their decision to make positive choices, and to engage in activities that were transformative.

Cultivate a Spiritual Life

Individual behaviours were also demonstrated through living spiritually. To live spiritually meant to be connected to self, humanity, nature, or the transcendent along with a continual search for meaning and purpose. It did not imply being religious, although for some participants, spirituality and religiosity were one and the same. Living spiritually was demonstrated by: questing for meaning, leading a value-based life, transcending self, and connecting with one's intuitive self and source of guidance.

Questing for meaning. Questing for meaning and purpose in life, including work, was a common pursuit of participants. Questions like, "What matters to me?" "Why am I here?" "Am I supposed to be here?" were frequent among participants. Choosing a career that was meaningful was seen as important by most participants. However, where the actual work was not seen to carry much meaning, participants reported "finding meaning in the meaninglessness." For example, Ken who was a parking attendant found meaning in acts of kindness towards patrons of his parkade. He got to know their names and took an interest in their story. He always had candy available for the children coming through for medical appointments. Although sitting in a booth, collecting money all day, did not seem to reflect a higher cause or have much intrinsic meaning, Ken was able to find it in his relationships with the customers.

Consistent with finding meaning in the meaningless, participants gave examples of finding the profound in everyday experiences. For some, it involved sanctifying, or making sacred, everyday experiences. Participants reported investing in everyday activities, events, and relationships with a sense of the sacred or divine. The landscape designer called it, "seeing the poetry in the everyday."

Lead a value-based life. In choosing a value-based life, participants demonstrated virtuous behaviours. For example, they showed respect, kindness, and compassion towards others. Individuals with high spirit at work reported looking for the fundamental goodness and worthiness in human life and exemplified being guided by a strong conscience. They seemed to share a code of conduct that reflected an intention of higher good.

Gratitude and thanksgiving were practiced in everyday activities. Some participants, like Donna, reported feeling "privileged" to do their particular work:

> I suppose it is the variety of the dis-eases that I see and had the privilege to be a part of helping. It is a privilege. Privilege is an important word in all of that too, because you don't have to come to me. It is a privilege that you trust me enough that you let me help you or anybody else who comes to see me for that matter. . . . And I get the privilege of many (*voice softens*) of those because of the training I have.

Others were thankful for the opportunities it afforded. For example, Rowena shared a time when she thanked God for the opportunity to participate in a dialogue on a very contentious topic, "'Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this, to be part of this dialogic interchange' and how graced I felt (*voice softens*) that this was something; it is important." Larry's comments reflected the feelings of gratitude expressed by many participants, "I am glad to be alive. I am glad to go work. I am glad to be doing what I am doing."

In addition to this sense of gratitude, participants demonstrated and practiced a sense of humility and modesty. Donna spoke of consciously keeping "a certain humility about [her]self" in order to be reminded of her limited powers. Larry advised that his patients often told his staff that he was not pretentious, a statement that he took pride in:

> I don't feel superior to people and I learned that from my father. . . . My patients will often say to the staff that I am not pretentious . . . My attitude is that I am the same as everyone; this is the gift I have. . . . It is something you have been given.

Although participants took responsibility for their actions and their work, they seldom took credit for their skills or abilities. Instead, some, like Larry, referred to them as gifts.

Transcend self. Participants with high spirit at work seemed to transcend self. Rather than focus on their own self-promotion, these individuals dedicated their work to a higher cause. It was important that their work was in service of something larger than self and that it would make a positive contribution. Although individuals in this study presented at varying levels of transcending self-interest, they all shared the conviction of serving others, as explained by Ben:

> I think that we are supposed to be in service to others. I think that is very important for fulfilling oneself, that is, being of service of others. I don't think you can feel that way unless you are helping somebody.

In transcending self, participants reported making efforts to make others feel good. Like Maureen, they were very clear that, "It is all about them [the customers or patients]. It is not about you." This act of transcending self was apparent in career choice.

Ben said that he "wanted to be in a service . . . profession" and Larry "chose to be a dentist because it was a helping profession." It was also obvious in one's view of work. Rose described her work in real estate as "when you work the way I do, it is a service," whereas Ken suggested that he was "working for the people [customers] here at [location]," and Rowena saw herself as "a seed planter." Sandra, a police officer viewed her work as a service regardless of the situation she was dealing with and whether or not the individual she was serving perceived it at helpful:

> I like people and I like helping them. That is what I love. And no matter what I am doing, that is what I am doing, I am helping them.

Connect with one's intuitive self and one's source of guidance. Participants reported that they connected with their intuitive self, and in many instances, their personal source of guidance. One way participants connected with their intuitive self or guidance was by living fully in the moment, being present, and focusing on whatever was happening in that moment. Noreen referred to it as, "concentrating on the beauty of what is happening now." In describing individuals like herself who experienced spirit at work, Karla described her understanding of living in the moment:

> They are not workaholics. They don't work necessarily to the exclusion of other things, yet when they are in that moment, in doing that, it is engaging to them. They are into it. They are not wishing that they were somewhere else. They are not begrudging their time, they are not all of those things. They are present and in that flow. And then when they move onto their family or something else, they are into that, so that their attention is where it is appropriate at that time.

Participants with high spirit at work reported being open to cultivating an intuitive and wise self as well as following through on their intuition. Like Donna, many participants reported that "intuition is part and parcel of every engagement I have." Karla described herself as "naturally following a hunch," Ben said he "has reasonably good instincts," Kelly described "listening to her inner voice," and Ken was "able to read people." In police work, Sandra said it was "so important to listen to your body, to listen to how you feel, what it is telling you" and referred to herself as being "a little psychic. I can often tell that something is going to happen before it happens." Karla described intuition as coming "as an insight and I just needed to follow it through." Intuition was seen as a way of knowing.

In addition to trusting in and acting upon their intuition, some participants reported a practice of connecting with their Higher Power or the Universe in order to tap into a form of "guidance." This connection seemed to be unique and very personal. For Kelly, the practice involved "recognition" and "deepening of the connection to spirit." For others, it was an awareness and acceptance of "being guided to do particular things at work." A few participants reported consciously asking for and receiving guidance from the Universe. Like Ben, others saw it as connecting to "your own life force, your energy" that which you "bring . . . inside of you." Yet others, like Donna, reported that they made a choice "to be a conduit to allow that energy to flow through them." Finally, Noreen was "convinced that that [her passion] is part of God at work." For many participants, connecting with one's guidance included an opening of self to their intuition, the Universe, or Higher Power.

Whether or not participants would call it living spiritually, they all engaged in spiritual practices. The tendency of these individuals with high spirit at work to search for meaning in work and everyday life, live a value-based life, engage in work that transcended self, and connect with their source of guidance, including their intuitive self, supports the notion that living spiritually fosters the experience of individual spirit at work.

Appreciate Self and Others

Appreciation of self and others was another way participants with high spirit at work reported fostering their experience. This was exemplified by respecting one's own worth, respecting the value of others, enriching relationships, and practicing accountability to self and others.

Respect one's own worth. Understanding and respecting their own worth, particularly the value it had for others, was a common behaviour among participants. They understood how their particular work contributed to the overall good. Although they reported an appreciation of their unique skills and abilities, and the significance they held about their work, they advised that their contribution involved more than what was visible. For example, Maureen explained, "you don't realize that maybe you are doing more for them than just cutting their hair." Larry was more explicit about the value of his work as a dentist, "it is not just doing what I do in the mouth."

Respect the value of others. In addition to respecting their own worth, participants reported that they respected the value of others. The expression of appreciation and respect for others, particularly clients, customers, and patients, was constant. Maureen's comment exemplified the experience of other participants, "I really do value my clients . . . that relationship with them . . . that connection . . . I really do have that connection with a lot of my clients." Some participants, like Ben and Donna, spoke of sharing the responsibility for healing with their patient. Karla spoke of valuing the team and teamwork, "that sense of process of creating with others" and keeping each other on track.

Enrich relationships. Relationships were valued and nurtured in and outside of work. Participants reported that they cared about the people with whom they worked. As Ben explained, "You care about what happens. You know the individuals, you know their name, you learn about them, you know about their life." Kelly stated that her experience of spirit at work was strongest when she connected with other people from the heart. Referring to the "platinum rule," she suggested, "Do unto others as they would like to be done unto." Along this same line, Larry advised that he likes to see patients in his practice treated like family:

> One thing I always say is, 'What if that was your mother or your brother or your sister in the chair, what would you do? Don't treat anyone differently than you would treat your family.'

Sandra advised that in her work, "It is important to get to know people really well . . . to take time to talk to people . . . to build relationships."

Practise accountability to self and others. Concurrent with respecting self and others, participants reported being accountable towards self and others. They demonstrated this through being responsible and following through with commitments to themselves and others. Sandra's comment illustrates this:

> You [might] think, 'I just have to write up this report,' but no, people are waiting for you to do things and this is a very important thing for them. If you get into a car accident or your house gets broken into, it is important to you at that time. You want that dealt with.

Maureen shared a similar opinion about her work as a hairdresser:

> It doesn't matter whether you have a bad day, you have to leave it at the door because you know, those people are coming here, they are paying good money and they want to have a service and feel good and it is all about them.

Respecting their own worth, participants advised that they "showed others how they wanted to be treated." Taking "personal responsibility to keep everything in check," Noreen said, "we teach people how to respect us . . . we need to know what our parameters are, what our boundaries are." In response to a question about the potential of being taken advantage of, Kelly asserted:

> That is a choice. You decide if you are going to be taken advantage of or not. . . . I have always been pretty good about saying yes to things that fit and turning down opportunities that weren't right for me.

Participants advised that this accountability, both to themselves and others, brought a focus to their work.

These examples lend support to the idea that an appreciation of self and others fosters the experience of spirit at work. The act of appreciating self and others translated into respecting one's own worth, respecting the value of others, nurturing relationships and practicing accountability towards themselves and others.

Refill the Cup

The final way in which participants illustrated individual behaviours that fostered spirit at work was through their commitment to refill their own cup. This was demonstrated by engaging in self-care and rejuvenation and pursuing that which was intrinsically rewarding.

Engage in self-care and rejuvenation. Participants reported that they regularly engaged in a process of self-care and rejuvenation. Although this held a different meaning for each person, they all reported engaging in some type of self-care. Taking care of self included exercising, reading, learning something new, visiting with family and friends, having alone time, taking holidays, having a massage, taking courses, and engaging the services of others, for example, a psychologist or chiropractor.

Participants advised of listening and responding to the physical symptoms of their body. For example, Donna reported that when physical exhaustion got in the way of her experiencing spirit at work, she stopped doing maternity and acute care and focused again on her family practice. Larry stated that at his age, he did not want to push any harder and that working fewer hours meant that he would not burn-out as easily. Shelia shared:

> I don't consider myself the type of person that would ever let my job get in the way of balancing my family, or balancing my own personal life. I like to have fun when I'm at work, and I will put in extra hours, but I won't let it interfere with my ability to have a good family relationship. . . . My — what I call my "oil lights" go on way before it starts to affect my family. I'll say, "Whoa, I'm starting to get too grouchy with [my husband]," or "No, I *have* to take that holiday for 2 weeks with him," or "No, I'm going home at 5 o'clock" — that type of thing; "I'm working too much."

In addition to being in touch with their bodies, most participants reported practicing centering techniques. With a focus on being grounded and centered, participants engaged in meditation, listening to music, prayer, removing energetic blocks, and walking in nature. Some participants reported practicing a method of "clearing" at work. For example, Ben advised:

> You have to find that quiet spot inside yourself. . . . You need to learn to be by yourself . . . It doesn't come naturally . . . Find your center, that calm hub of the wheel and when you find that, you learn where it is and learn to go to it and you can do it anywhere. So it doesn't matter what's happening around you. You can be on that hub all the time. And how would you do that? You would do it by practice and by being aware of the fact that it is there. It is there for everyone. . . . It can be anything . . . reading, music, meditation . . . where you feel that you are centered and calm and at peace and the worries and everything around you just falls away. . . . You can teach people that. . . . Then they can bring that strength to any situation they are facing.

Pursue that which is intrinsically rewarding. Of all the things that fostered spirit at work, the intrinsic reward experienced by participants seemed to be the greatest. It was the intrinsic reward that kept the participants going and this was evidenced in comments about their work like, "it gets me cranked," "that is what keeps me at it," "it makes getting up and going to work [okay]," it is " the thing that gets you up in the morning," and "gives you that raison d'être." Donna called it the "fruits of the labour of education, training, and experience." Ben shared a similar idea, "It is like filling the cup. It is intrinsic. The whole idea is that you are serving or helping others . . . and I do think that is one of the few ways you can feel fulfilled yourself." Participants were aware of and chose work that was intrinsically rewarding to them. They recognized their contribution and celebrated their accomplishments. Ben offered:

> I have to admit that . . . the taste of sugar is when somebody says, "Oh, I am much better." When I hear that (*voice softens*), oh yeah, that is good. . . . and I am happy. That is what I consider to be the little selfish part of me, that ego part that says, "that is my high, my rush at work."

Participants engaged in a process of self-care and rejuvenation that had personal meaning. They pursued work that was intrinsically rewarding and contributed to their sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. These practices of individuals with high spirit at work suggest that taking the time to refill one's cup is a factor in the experience of spirit at work.

Overall, participants took responsibility in fostering their own experience of spirit at work. They lived purposely and consciously, they cultivated a spiritual life, they showed appreciation for themselves and others, and they took time to refill their cup. Although these behaviours were evident in their personal and work life, participants also indicated that their experience of spirit at work was influenced by organizational factors.

Organizational Characteristics that Fostered Spirit at Work

The second key theme area was related to the characteristics of the organization. These factors clustered into seven categories that fostered spirit at work: *inspiring leadership and mentorship; strong organizational foundation; organizational integrity; positive workplace culture and space; sense of community among members; opportunities for personal fulfillment, continuous learning, and development; and appreciation and regard for employees and their contribution.* As in the first theme, there was overlap among these categories but they are presented as distinct groups for purposes of illustration. In particular, inspiring leadership seemed to facilitate many of the factors that fostered spirit at work. Although a hierarchy of organizational qualities did not emerge, most factors seemed to stem from the leadership within the organization, so it is depicted as the hub of the wheel in Figure 4-2.

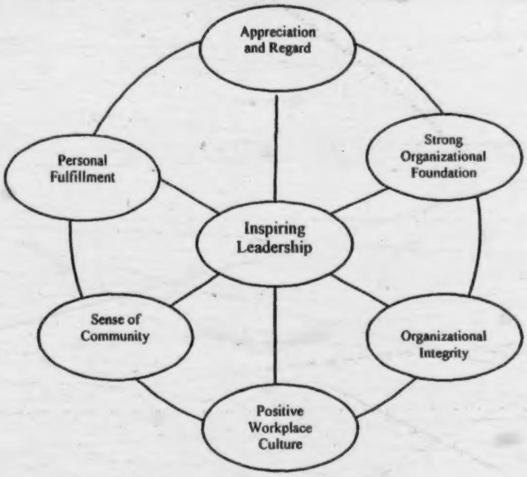
Appreciation and Regard
Strong Organizational Foundation
Personal Fulfillment
Inspiring Leadership
Sense of Community
Organizational Integrity
Positive Workplace Culture

Figure 4.2. Organizational Factors that Foster Spirit at Work

Inspiring Leadership

Participants' experience of spirit at work was enhanced through leadership that was inspiring. Participants, who were employees, reported being inspired by their leaders and the example they set. Participants, who were in leadership roles, indicated that they tried to inspire their employees and model behaviours that were consistent with the mission and philosophy of the organization.

Culture of caring. Participants indicated that their leaders focused on relationships and were concerned about the welfare of all staff. In her experience, Noreen noticed a benefit of this type of culture for both the staff and the leader as "you get that coming and going" where everyone is sharing with each other and feeling like they are contributing. Karla suggested that "a culture of caring and a culture where people or managers can manage from the heart and work with people" was a key element in fostering spirit at work. This was seen to be critically important in police work as was expressed by Sandra:

> That is a huge thing for me. Like my corporal that I had for the first two years of service was like my father; he was like a dad to me. . . . He is a person who looks at all my files, he is the person who gives you all the attaboys and pats on the back and stuff. . . .

In Sandra's situation, this culture of caring translated into a police detachment that was extremely close and supportive.

Enabling leadership. Participants reported that their leaders enabled, mentored, and supported staff to realize the intention of the organization. In doing so, leaders regularly communicated the philosophy and priorities to staff, involved members in the organization's decision making process, ensured employees had sufficient information to make decisions about their work, and let go of control, allowing the employee do the work. Shelia described her leader:

> . . . [She] delegates responsibility and trusts that you can do it. . . . She believes in challenging people. . . .She lets me take control. She does not interfere with where I'm at and what I'm doing . . . she waits for me to share where I'm at in the process, whether I need more information, that sort of thing. She's not the kind that will hover over your shoulder and watch you do it and check on everything you've done.

As leaders themselves, some participants saw their job as a "seed planter," planting seeds and thoughts, but leaving it up to the individual to bring it to fruition.

Modeling behaviours. Leaders and senior staff were said to model behaviours that were consistent with the mission and philosophy of the organization as well as cultivate those same behaviours in staff. Some participants suggested that spirit at work "collectively is determined by the leadership" of the organization because it is the leader "that gives it form." Ken discussed how a new Dean changed his department:

> The new Dean came in . . . and he just changed everybody's attitude. He made everybody work as a team. . . . He walks around and talks to everybody. He knows everybody's name. He is amazing. He is inspirational. . . . He inspired me because I have seen how he has changed the whole atmosphere in that building. . . He said that at [this organization] we want people to be committed, not just part of it. He said, "think of breakfast – bacon and eggs – the chicken was involved; the pig was committed."

Sometimes this modeling occurred outside of one's actual work. For example, even though he never worked directly for him, Larry talked about how he emulated his mentor in his own dental practice.

The creation of a caring culture, the practice of enabling leadership, and modeling of behaviours that were consistent with the organization's philosophy and intention support the notion that leadership is an important aspect in participants' development of spirit at work.

A Strong Organizational Foundation

Participants reported that their experience of spirit at work was fostered when the organization was based on a strong foundation. This foundation generally included a shared vision, mission, values, purpose, and goals with an intention to contribute to the overall good of society.

Compelling vision. Participants reported that a compelling vision that served a higher purpose led to a strong organizational foundation. These organizations seemed to have the courage to "create a future." As Noreen suggested, they were willing "to push the boundaries a little each time" and "dared to put a vision around what could be." The organization's vision and mission always had to do with contributing to the overall good of society. Rowena carried that thought further and argued that:

> Any corporate responsibility also has a social responsibility and the two cannot be divided. We have in the past and that is why we haven't achieved both that we are capable of.

Moreover, participants reported sharing a common value base with colleagues that was related to the organization's vision.

Clarity of intention. In addition to a compelling organizational vision, individuals advised that they had personal clarity about the higher intention and purpose of their organization. They described awareness of the organizational philosophy and, in particular, why the organization existed and for whom the services were being provided. Kelly reported that once individuals understand the vision and mission of their organization, they are in a better position to see how they can make a contribution:

> The philosophical, mission, vision foundations stuff is really important. Because one of the things I have learned is that a lot of businesses don't really know what business they are in. They know what service they provide or what product they produce, but they don't necessarily know what business they are in. And if they

> can understand their business in that broader context of what it means to other people, and put their mission statements and that stuff in that context, it opens things up for all kinds of things. Then a petroleum company becomes an energy company. . . . Everybody understands what it means and sees how they contribute to that. It is very important.

Ben advised that the leader of his organization ensured that employees knew the priorities by "making sure that people remember why they are there." And, in her organization, Rowena reported that clarity of intention was enhanced through shared activities:

> So here, at our college, when we can pray together and have liturgies together, when we can support each other through some hard times, there is a greater sense of why we are here and what we are doing, a greater sense of our mission.

Reflection and evaluation. Participants advised that a strong foundation was facilitated by the organization undergoing a regular process of reflection and evaluation about the organization's vision and purpose. Given opportunities for reflection, participants were able to review the organization's mission, ascertain whether they made a difference individually and collectively, be reminded about why the organization exists, and determine where it is heading.

A compelling vision, clarity about the intention and purpose of the organization, and opportunities for reflection and evaluation suggests that a strong organizational foundation fosters the experience of spirit at work. A strong organizational foundation set the stage for organizational integrity and alignment between what the organization stands for and the work being undertaken.

Organizational Integrity

Participants reported that organizational integrity helped contribute to their experience of spirit at work. When there was alignment between the work of the organization and the organization's mission and purpose and when a climate of trust and honour permeated the organization, it made it easier for individuals to be authentic, to have personal integrity, and to see how their work was related to their personal values and higher purpose.

Alignment. In addition to the work of the organization being aligned with the organization's values, vision, and purpose, participants also reported congruency between the organization's mission and purpose and their personal values and higher purpose. Kelly's description of her work, ". . . the work and the people and the projects . . . were incredibly right" was an indication of alignment. A sense of alignment enabled Karla to remain focused on what was important even in a time of crisis because "it did feel right to be working in that topic area," it was "something that I felt connected to . . . and [I felt] that it was a good fit." Whereas these individuals saw the relationship between their work and what the organization stood for, other individuals recalled being helped to see how their particular work supported the purpose of the organization.

Trust and honour. Participants reported that their spirit at work was encouraged when their organization fostered trust and honour among its members and the people it served. This sense of integrity was evidenced through a presence of shared values which included being treated with kindness, dignity, trust, respect and acceptance. Care, collaboration, and support was demonstrated and cultivated by senior staff and seen as a critical factor in the creation of organizational integrity.

These examples of alignment between the organization's stated mission and work undertaken by employees, alignment between the individual's values and their work, and a climate of trust and honor support the view that organizational integrity is a factor in fostering spirit at work.

Positive Workplace Culture and Space

The fourth organizational characteristic that emerged was positive workplace culture and space. Participants reported that positive working environments – where they felt good about going to work, had a sense of comfort in the organization, and were able to focus on their work – fostered their experience of spirit at work. Because workplace culture tends to be reflective of leadership, relationships, opportunities, priorities, and how members are regarded, much overlap is seen between this and other categories. Yet, it is the combination of all of these facets that seems to determine workplace culture.

Consistent with the idea of enabling leadership, participants reported that their leaders created atmospheres that enabled them to be their best. What this meant to each individual varied according to their particular work. For example, Ben advised that because his employer setup the workplace to be peaceful and calm, he was able to be focussed in his work. Molly reported that the atmosphere in her workplace made everyone feel comfortable, whereas for Noreen, her workplace was opening and welcoming. Finally, Kelly suggested that her experience of spirit at work was impacted by the five senses of the work environment, "the sight, smell, if there is taste in the air, the things you touch, the things you hear." She was very conscious of effect that the physical environment had on her and other's spirit.

Rowena asserted that organizations either portray "a culture of good or a culture of evil." These individuals reported working in a culture of good. Like others, Shelia pointed to the role leaders have in creating an ethical work environment:

> . . . You look at these people that are into . . . capacity-building . . . they practice what they preach. . . . People see how they work, see the work ethic that they have – the motivation, the commitment, the honesty – you don't have to come and ask for my participation; I will volunteer it.

A positive work atmosphere and, in particular, a culture of good, points to the value of a positive workplace environment and space in fostering spirit at work.

A Sense of Community among Members

Participants reported that positive connections among staff and a sense of community were promoted in their organizations. This was characterized by personal relationships, working collaboratively, and sharing fun times.

Personal relationships. Participants reported that, in their organizations, members knew each other as individuals as well as colleagues. They "take time to connect and share with colleagues." They "recognize when someone is struggling" and they "support one another through hard times." Sandra advises that in police work:

> You have to be really close. You are trusting those people [colleagues] to help you out if you need them, so relationships are huge. . . . You can't be any closer that we are . . . we talk about everything.

As many participants did, Ken described his work environment as, "it is like a family over there." Strong connections with each another gave participants a sense of belonging to a community. These personal relationships extended beyond colleagues to other individuals they worked with and included associates, referral sources, specialists, collateral resources, and those individuals they were in business to serve.

Value of team. Participants reported that these collaborative, cooperative, and caring relationships enabled them to work effectively as a team. Recognizing that they "couldn't have gotten their on our own," participants spoke of the value of the team and how "they could learn from each other." Molly advised that, "since we have been doing it this way, it is like someone has lifted the world off my shoulders." As Rowena said, "it doesn't always have to be you;" the work can be shared with others.

Playfulness. Having fun and being playful seemed to be an important factor in participant's work experience. Karla reported that she "had so much fun doing [a particular project] . . . that it felt like play," whereas others suggested that it was important to play with and share fun times with colleagues. Rowena posited, "If you never play with your team mates, your team isn't a very good team – recognizing that none of us can do nearly the amount of work without the team."

This culture of caring and compassion, collaborative and cooperative relationships, teamwork, and shared fun seemed to give participants a feeling of deep connection with others suggesting that a sense of community also cultivates the experience of spirit at work.

Opportunities for Personal Fulfillment, Continuous Learning, and Development

Another way organizations created conditions for spirit at work was through the provision of opportunities for personal fulfillment, continuous learning and development. Participants reported that they were given opportunities to achieve professional and personal growth which came in many forms.

Engaging work. Participants reported that their spirit at work was enhanced through the ability to be involved in engaging work. Karla found her work to be engaging because it was interesting and had a problem solving component to it:

> I would call it really engaging, so really totally into it so that you don't notice the time, you are not really thinking about the time, you are not really thinking of anything else, you are quite full of the work itself. . . . So the passion comes from being engaged.

What made work engaging was unique to each individual and ranged from police investigations, to writing one's own music, to rescuing plants, to helping others problem solve, and developing programs for students. What was common seemed to be that opportunities were created for these individuals to be engaged in ways that had personal meaning.

Champion initiative and creativity. Some participants reported that employers encouraged an openness to possibilities and new ideas which resulted in positive outcomes. For example, Ben advised that his openness to learning about Chinese medicine, which was promoted by his leader, led to transformational change in his life and his work and, ultimately, his experience of spirit at work. Taking initiative seemed to go hand in hand with participants being provided with an outlet for creative expression. For example, participants reported that they valued the opportunity to experiment with new ideas, work with new concepts, and solve problems.

Flexibility and autonomy. Most participants reported having the flexibility and autonomy necessary to do their work. For some participants, this meant a choice in the hours they worked or how they scheduled their day or week. For others it was the freedom to make decisions or to determine how best to structure their work. Even though one participant was an employee, he had so much flexibility and autonomy that he advised that "essentially, I am working on my own . . . I am basically running my own business."

Flexibility and autonomy also translated into participants being able to make decisions and influence outcomes. Sandra advised that when she was out in the field, she had to make the decisions. "[The Police Force] put all of that onto us . . . to push ourselves and do our own thing. . . . they put a lot of trust in us to do everything." Karla suggested that it was important "to create opportunities for people to . . . be a part of [and] to have a voice in what they are doing and how they are doing it."

Life-long learning. For some participants, it was important that the employer "create those times when we learn something new." Several participants referred to training offered or supported by the organization. In some instances, this was directly related to work, but in other situations, it was related to personal growth. Karla described a program that a previous employer implemented that "got people to do some reflection and self-analysis" while exploring their skills, interests, and values. Other participants reported being supported to further their education.

These organizations supported personal fulfillment, ongoing learning, and development in a variety of ways, including providing opportunities for engaging work, promoting initiative and creativity, encouraging flexibility and autonomy, and cultivating life-long learning. All of these examples seem to indicate that a continuation of personal and professional growth fosters the experience of spirit at work.

Appreciation and Regard for Employees and their Contribution

The final way organizations cultivated individual spirit at work was to show appreciation and regard for its members and their contribution. They did this through valuing and recognizing the role and contribution of each person.

Valuing of each person's gifts and role. Participants indicated that it was important for organizations to "help members understand and respect their own worth" and to ensure that "each person is valued for their particular contribution." Noreen stated:

> I think what is important is to establish an atmosphere where everyone feels that they can contribute and they are there for a reason and we honour what they have to contribute. That leads to the collective spirit of that workplace. It creates an atmosphere that is open and welcoming and each person is valued for their gifts and what they have to share.

Kelly took this idea further and suggested that "... if every person in the organization understands how they can contribute to the overall goal and how important each one of them is [doing] that – I think organizations would fly."

This perception was exemplified by Shelia' story. She explained how her boss's belief in her and her potential to contribute resulted in her participating, as an administrative assistant, in the development of the strategic plan. Being told, "You have a *lot* to offer.... [Your] input is important" freed her to share her expertise.

Recognition of contribution. Participants reported that their work efforts were recognized, internally and sometimes by outside sources. Even though these individuals were intrinsically motivated, Karla advised that "It feels good when someone says, 'Oh, you guys did great.' ... You knew that first and then it is kind of like the icing on the cake when they tell you." Having others notice and appreciate your work felt good. Sandra indicated that, "The [Police Force] is astounding for making their employees feel worthy and [that they are] doing really good in their job." In addition to being acknowledged for their contribution, some participants reported being recognized through awards, appointments, gifts, bonuses, and trips. They all shared a sense of being appreciated by their organization and seemed to be recognized as adequately as they needed to be. Being valued for one's particular contribution and role in the organization as well as being recognized in a way that is meaningful to the individual supports the view that appreciation and regard for members and their contribution encourages the experience of spirit at work.

The Power of Organizational Characteristics

Participants indicated that their experience of spirit at work was influenced by organizational factors. Leadership that was inspiring, a strong organizational foundation, organizational integrity, a positive workplace culture and space, a sense of community among members, opportunities for personal fulfillment and continuous learning, and appreciation and regard were key factors that fostered their experience of spirit at work.

Shelia's story highlights how different organizational factors drastically influenced her experience of work. She reported that the influence of her organization was so strong that she changed from being a caring and committed employee to one who was bitter and uncaring. It was only upon moving to a new organization that she was able to regain her spirit at work.

Shelia described a time in her career where she felt a lack of respect, felt degraded and put down, felt that her services were not needed, was given no information, felt like she was blocked, and had no sense of belonging. She recalled becoming bitter and adopting an attitude of not caring:

> To heck; I'm going on a coffee break, and I don't care if he calls," or "I'm taking a longer lunch, and I don't care," or "I'll just sleep in and be late." . . . I was developing an attitude, and it was no longer cooperative, it was no longer happy.

Being unhappy with who she had become, Shelia changed jobs. She described her current situation, where she feels included, challenged, supported, respected, trusted, valued, involved in rewarding work, and recognized for her contribution:

> You're so committed to doing well in the job, and you really want to see it work well, that no matter what the problem that's getting in your way or that person that's not cooperating, you're not going to give up on it; you are going to work much harder at it because you really want to see it succeed. . . . You have a sense that you are making a difference.

The person was the same. The organizational features were different. The outcomes were opposite.

Benefits of Spirit at Work

Regardless of how spirit at work was fostered, it was seen to have benefits for many, and in particular, the individual, the consumer, and the organization. Figure 4-3 displays the benefits of spirit at work which include: an increased sense of wellbeing, enhanced personal relationships, improved customer service, and increased productivity at work. A description of each benefit follows.

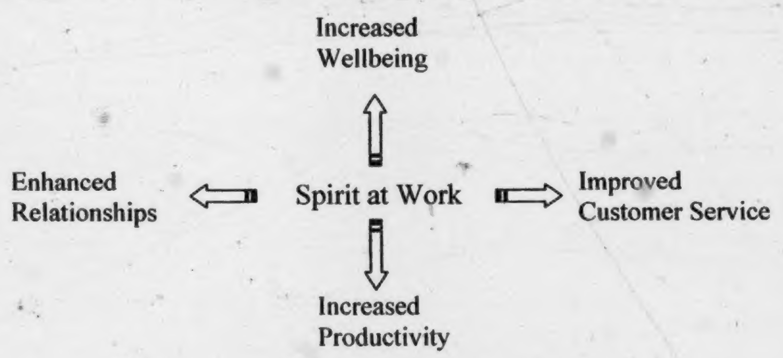
Increased Wellbeing
Enhanced Relationships
Spirit at Work
Improved Customer Service
Increased Productivity

Figure 4-3. Benefits of Individual Spirit at Work

Increased Wellbeing

As a result of having high spirit at work, participants reported an increase in subjective wellbeing that overflowed to other parts of their lives. Shelia spoke of enjoying improved physical health and mental stability, whereas others reported feeling alive and energized. Maureen described "feeling a lot better in general – in everything I do." Similarly Karla reported that spirit at work:

> . . . contributes to that sense of wellbeing and then that overflows into all of your life. . . . My life is more integrated. . . . So, that is the benefit – integration and having a sense of more completion in my life, rather than segmentation.

Consistent with a sense of wellbeing, most participants reported feeling calm, serene and good about themselves. For example, Noreen described her experience:

> Then you have calm . . . I think that when spirit at work is happening, there is a sense of feeling good about yourself and about the work that you are doing and to feel that [what you are doing] is working.

This sense of feeling good about their work and contributing to others was common among participants and often described as "the reason I get up in the morning." All participants spoke of that intrinsic reward that kept them motivated and satisfied. Rowena referred to it as the "harvest" whereas Ben described it as:

> . . . filling the cup. It is intrinsic. The whole idea [is that] you are serving or helping others, and I do think that is one of the few ways that you can feel fulfilled yourself. I think that is intrinsic in how it benefits me.

Enhanced Personal Relationships

Participants reported that their relationships with others benefited as a result of having spirit at work. In particular, they spoke about a "oneness" that they shared with others and a sense of team or sense of community that they experienced with colleagues. Kelly described her relationship with others:

> I think there is openness to other people that comes with it because you know that you are not alone. You are quite happy to let [others] be whoever they are, which is a real gift. I tend not to get irritated by other people . . . I think I am easier to get along with. I might almost be boring to some people because I am laid back, even though I care passionately about things.

She went on to describe the positive effect she had on others:

> I am told that I don't know what the impact is when I am in the room. I just make people feel better. Whether it is in a meeting or – there is just something that comes with me that I am not conscious of specifically, but I have had a lot of

> people say, "You know, the meeting is so much better when you are here." . . . I seem to be a calming influence . . . for people.

Similarly, Sandra, described how her relationship with her colleagues benefited because she had spirit at work, "All the guys tell me, 'We can never work with anyone as good as you' and [these comments are] constant."

In some instances, participants reported that these benefits extended to family members. For example, Noreen spoke of being able to share her feelings of happiness and contentment with her family whereas Larry suggested that his family can feel when he has "given someone a better day" and that "they relish in my enthusiasm."

Improved Customer Service

Another benefit to spirit at work was improved customer services. Whether the customers were students, patients, real estate clients, or persons getting their hair done, all participants believed that their customers benefited from them having spirit at work. Noreen talked about students having "the experience of being honoured, heard, and valued." Larry spoke of patients being treated well. Rose described helping clients and doing extra things for them, like driving them to the airport or connecting them with agents in other cities. Maureen reported that because she was a lot happier, she was "going to service her [customers] a lot better."

Not only did persons with high spirit at work give improved customer service, they motivated others to do the same. Donna spoke of motivating her staff with her passion and Larry reported that his staff, as well as his patients, benefited from his high spirit at work:

> I think the benefit for people that [work] with you is that they come to work happy, they leave happy, they are energetic, [and] they are dedicated. . . . The

> *patients*, are treated [well] . . . When you come in with that alive feeling, they know that you are at your peak.

Increased Productivity

The last way participants reported benefiting from spirit at work was by being more productive, both in terms of the quality and quantity of work they produced. Shelia reported that "because I am *so* motivated and tend to be conscientious, [I] accomplish a lot." Most participants identified a high level of energy which they believed translated into increased productivity. Maureen was emphatic about a change in her productivity since she experienced spirit at work and related this increase in productivity to her increased energy:

> Absolutely. I have way more energy. I can put in a 12 hour day. I will stay late. If I am having a busy day and someone wants to be fitted in, I will fit them in, whereas, I might not have done that before.

Although many participants were very successful financially, for them, being productive was not limited to just an increase in profit. It also included producing a transformation, described by Noreen as "that sense that something has changed, something was learned, or a connection was made." Finally, productivity and success not only had benefits for the organization, but its members as well. Noreen described it as a spin-off:

> I think that has its spin-off with us individually because then we feel success with what we are creating and we feel that our contribution has added to that whole, [and realize that] that new path that we are going down couldn't be without me.

Feelings of increased wellbeing, improved personal relationships, enhanced customer service, and increased productivity lend support to the view that there are many benefits to spirit at work. When asked about the downside to spirit at work, most participants had a hard time identifying examples and quickly reported that the benefits far outweighed any downsides, "if there could be any downside." Larry reported, "If there are any negatives, and I *stress* that, if there are any negatives, then [my family] would be the ones who have ever felt it." However, when asked if her passion for her work gets in the way of anything, Donna reported:

> Sure. It gets in the way of my health, gets in the way of time with my family . . . it gets in the way of learning more – you are just too exhausted to pick up the book and learn more, gets in the way of having balance and holidays and getting on the treadmill when you should have got on the treadmill. Sure it gets in the way of a lot. Apparently not enough (*laughs*).

When asked about the possibility of being taken advantage by others, Ben was clear, that "I don't let that happen" as was Kelly, who argued that we choose whether or not we will be taken advantage of. Karla shared her perspective that we all have tremendous capacity:

> . . . You have a number of things which have meaning in your life, and you have the capacity to hold them all, and this is just one of the things that you are passionate about. It is not the only thing that you are passionate about. You are also passionate about your family, you are passionate about your friends, what ever else. It may be other hobbies that you are passionate about, love for other things. I think we have a tremendous capacity to hold a lot of very positive things in our life.

Discussion

The purpose of this part of a larger qualitative study was to determine the factors that contribute to individual spirit at work and to determine the consequences of spirit at work. Several benefits and few downsides to the experience of spirit at work were identified. Spirit at work was reported to positively affect participants' sense of wellbeing, personal relationships, customer service, and productivity. In addition to personality characteristics which may predispose some individuals to the experience of spirit at work (Kinjerski, 2004b), this research revealed that individual spirit at work was fostered by both personal actions and organizational characteristics.

Individuals with high spirit at work took responsibility and action for creating the kind of life experiences they desired, including work. They consciously lived a life that was purposeful and meaningful. They worked at cultivating and living a spiritual, value-based life. These individuals recognized their own worth and the value of others and expressed appreciation for both. Finally, they took time to refill their own cup by pursuing that which they found intrinsically rewarding and engaging in self-care and rejuvenation in a way they found meaningful.

In addition to identifying personal actions that fostered spirit at work, these individuals distinguished several organizational characteristics that furthered their experience. Seven organizational factors that enhanced the experience of individual spirit at work included:

1. Leaders and senior members inspired employees through their leadership and their example.
2. The organization was based on a strong organizational foundation that included a shared vision, mission, values, purpose, and an intention to contribute to the overall good of society.
3. The organization had organizational integrity and its work was aligned with its mission and purpose.
4. A positive working environment was created and leaders were concerned about providing a positive physical space for employees to work in.
5. Positive connections among all members and a sense of community were promoted in the organization.
6. Opportunities were created for members to pursue professional and personal growth and to fulfill their own personal mission through work.

7. The organization appreciated and showed regard for the contribution made by its members.

Identification of personal actions and organizational factors that cultivate the experience of spirit at work supports the view that spirit at work can be created and nurtured. Given the well adjusted and actualized personality profile of persons with high spirit at work (Kinjerski, 2004b), it is likely that a person's ability and motivation to nurture spirit at work as well as respond to organizational factors that enhance spirit at work are affected by personality. Thus, it is hypothesized that spirit at work develops as a combination of personality, individual behaviours, and organizational factors. A framework incorporating personality, personal actions, and organizational features follows in Figure 4-4.

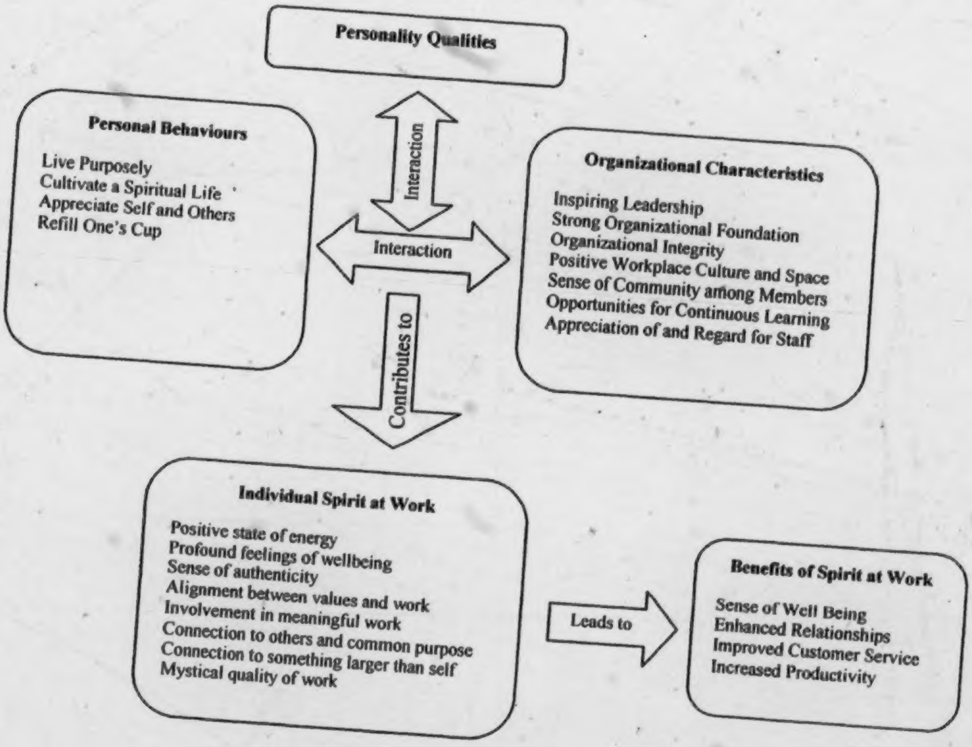
Personality Qualities
Personal Behaviours
Live Purposely
Cultivate a Spiritual Life
Appreciate Self and Others
Refill One's Cup
Interaction
Interaction
Organizational Characteristics
Inspiring Leadership
Strong Organizational Foundation
Organizational Integrity
Positive Workplace Culture and Space
Sense of Community among Members
Opportunities for Continuous Learning
Appreciation of and Regard for Staff
Contributes to
Individual Spirit at Work
Positive state of energy
Profound feelings of wellbeing
Sense of authenticity
Alignment between values and work
Involvement in meaningful work
Connection to others and common purpose
Connection to something larger than self
Mystical quality of work
Leads to
Benefits of Spirit at Work
Sense of Well Being
Enhanced Relationships
Improved Customer Service
Increased Productivity

Figure 4-4. Factors that Contribute to Spirit at Work

The major finding of this study, however, is participants identified that the creation and nurturance of individual spirit at work is a shared responsibility between the individual and the organization. Neither the individual nor the organization has sole responsibility. Moreover, it appears that spirit at work can be fostered in either realm. The experience of participants suggests, however, that the potential for increased spirit at work occurs through a combined effort on behalf of the individual and organization. This hypothesis remains to be confirmed.

These findings complement the emerging literature on spirit at work which has identified positive outcomes of spirit at work for the employee and the organization and has described methods promoted by management consultants and organizations to foster such an experience. In particular, the benefits for a new employee contract where there is full expression of self, engagement in meaningful work, and opportunities for life-long learning, including personal growth and spiritual development is supported. Organizations that are promoting spirit at work or workplace spirituality seem to have adopted this new contract and are employing strategies that have been identified in this study. Further, the results endorse the longstanding view argued in the work-family literature that one's personal and work life are not separate (Chow & Berheide, 1988), and moreover, can come together to enhance both personal and organizational outcomes (Kohn & Schooler, 1982). Thus, this study supports previous research and practice that encourages personal exploration and development in the context of a work environment. Finally, the results suggest that corporate policies need to attend not only to the needs of customers, stakeholders and the financial performance of the organization, but also to the needs of the employee.

The factors participants identified as fostering spirit at work are consistent with factors included in the programs and practices of successful organizations discussed earlier, for example, the integration of spirituality into corporate programs, the introduction of the "whole person" model, fostering alignment between personal goals and the vision of the organization, exploration of working consciously at higher levels, provisions of opportunities for continuous learning, cultivation of a shared vision and emphasis on social responsibility. Moreover, three critical traits identified in the top 100 Best Companies, visionary and inspiring leadership, a sense of purpose among staff, and physical work environments with amenities to support employees (Lieber, 1998), were also shown to be fundamental in fostering spirit at work, lending support to the view that a combination of individual characteristics and organizational features has a positive effect, not only for the individual, but also the organization. Finally, the eight elements of spiritual leadership as proposed by Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, and Kakabadse (2002), building shared values, setting a common vision, creating shared meaning, enabling growth and transformation, helping followers to feel powerful and influential, following intuition to produce real change that matters, committing to service and servant leadership, and transforming of selves, others, and their organizations, were identified as factors that foster individual spirit at work. As expected, leadership was identified as an important component in the development of spirit at work. The notion that many of the methods directed at enhancing workplace spirituality also contributes to the development and nurturance of individual spirit at work is supported.

The implications of this study are many. These findings suggest that spirit at work benefits the employee, the customer, and the organization making it a topic of interest for the individual and the organization. The discovery that these participants report that spirit at work can be fostered through individual actions and organizational features opens the doors for personal exploration and development as well as program development and implementation at the organizational level. For example, strategies designed to enhance individual spirit at work can target the employee, the organization, or both. They can be limited to individual personal growth and transformation or as comprehensive as organizational transformation. Moreover, whereas the organization can direct interventions toward the employee and the organization, the individual can engage in personal exploration and development in and outside the work environment.

These findings suggest many strategies for enhancing personal spirit at work. Courses or personal coaching that is directed at personal exploration and spiritual development could focus on living with authenticity, conscious intention, and living in alignment with that which is intrinsically rewarding. Recognizing that individuals take different paths to spirit at work (Kinjerski, 2004a), strategies could be tailored to address persons who might be on those paths. For example, programs may target individuals who are approaching mid-life and possibly on the coming together path. Others may be directed toward staff involved in transformative events at the work level, for example, job layoffs, mergers, and downsizing, and at the personal level, for example, divorce, death of spouse. Training programs could be augmented through personal coaching, employee assistance programs, career counselling, and on-going support groups. Finally, some initiatives may be designed to target personal behaviours and organizational factors. For example, the development of leadership programs can be seen as having objectives at two levels, a personal enhancement program as well as an intervention directed at creating a work environment that fosters employee spirit at work. Many of these strategies emphasize the personal actions that foster spirit at work.

The research findings point to a multitude of strategies, programs, policies, and training initiatives that, if implemented at the organizational level, could foster individual spirit at work. The selection and training of leaders that are inspiring and support the new organizational culture is an important beginning. These leaders can then ensure that the vision, mission, and core values of the organization encompass a “higher intention” that is understood and embraced by all staff. Implementation of strategies, such as business plans, work plans, employee goals, and employee appraisal systems that reflect and operationalize the organization’s higher intention would contribute to organizational integrity. Regular review of such tools could ensure that the work of the organization is in alignment with the espoused mission and core values and that the needs and desires of employees as well as customers, stake holders, and the financial performance of the organization are taken into account. An organizational filter can be created that will screen all policies, goals, strategies, key decisions, and disbursement of funding, according to the organization’s purpose and direction. This organizational filter can be used to review and evaluate work and programs against the shared purpose and strategic plan. The conscious creation of a positive workplace culture is important. Employee spirit at work is nurtured in environments characterized by caring, dignity, integrity, trust, freedom, and honesty and that foster creativity, empowerment, autonomy, flexibility, entrepreneurship, collaboration and teamwork. When organizations create opportunities for personal fulfillment, self improvement, continuous learning, and personal and professional development, this encourages individuals to find that which has intrinsic meaning for them and facilitates opportunities to explore work in those areas. Finally, initiatives could include efforts designed to develop a sense of community and shared commitment among staff along with ongoing appreciation and regard for all staff and their contribution. Implementing many or most of these strategies would not only enhance individual spirit at work, it would likely bring about an organizational transformation.

As with all qualitative studies, these findings are based on the lived experience of a small group of individuals and therefore may not be representative of all individuals who experience spirit at work. All except one participant was Caucasian, therefore, the findings may not be transferable to individuals of other ethnic backgrounds. However, the identified factors seemed to apply equally for the Aboriginal participant. Only participants with self-identified high levels of spirit at work were interviewed. A selection of participants that included persons with low spirit at work may have given a clearer understanding of the differences among those who have high spirit at work and those who do not. Moreover, such a sample may have helped to identify those factors that stand out in enhancing spirit at work. Finally, participants in this study shared a similar personality profile, making it difficult to ascertain whether the identified factors apply to all persons.

Research always sets the stage for new studies. This qualitative research contributes to our understanding of the personal actions and organizational factors that foster individual spirit at work. In other work, I have developed and am continuing to validate a measure of individual spirit at work which should assist in evaluating the effectiveness of these identified factors. Future research should test how personality, personal behaviour, and organizational characteristics independently and interactively contribute to spirit at work. It will be the understanding coming out of this testing that will provide the sound basis for those who wish to develop programs or interventions to foster spirit at work. Moreover, such research should determine if there is a hierarchy to the individual behaviours that foster spirit at work and identify the organizational features that have the most effect on individual spirit at work.

Identification of the benefits of spirit at work along with the personal and organizational factors that foster individual spirit at work should provide some insights for those wishing to create and nurture such an experience. In addition to supporting the view that spirit at work is positive for the employee and the organization, this research paves the way for future enhancements that are no longer speculative, but have some support in research. However, organizations were not so far off when they focused on the development of personal spirituality at the individual level and leadership at the organizational level. These two enhancements may very well be central to the experience of individual spirit at work.

References

Ashmos, D., & Duchon, D. (2000). Spirituality at work. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 9*, 134-145.

Benefiel, M. (2003). Mapping the terrain of spirituality in organizations research. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 16*, 367-377.

Betcherman, G., & Lowe, G. (1997). *The future of work in Canada: A synthesis report.* Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks.

Brandt, E. (1996, April). Workplace trends: Corporate pioneers explore spirituality. *HR Magazine,* 82-87.

Cacioppe, R. (2000). Creating spirit at work: Re-visioning organizational development and leadership – Part 1. *The Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 21,* 48-54.

Caudron, S. (1997). The search for meaning at work. *Training and Development, 51*(9), 24-32.

Cavanagh, G.F. (1999). Spirituality for managers: Context and critique. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 12*, 186-199.

Charmaz, K. (2000). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 509-535). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Chow, E., & Berheide, C. (1988). The interdependence of family and work: A framework for family life education, policy, and practice. *Family Relations, 37,* 23-28.

Duxbury, L., & Higgins, C. (2002). *Work-life balance in the new millennium: Where are we: Where do we need to go?* (Executive Summary). Ottawa: Carleton University School of Business.

Fairholm, G. (1997). *Capturing the heart of leadership: Spirituality and community in the new American workplace.* Westport, CT: Praeger.

Fast, J.E., & Skrypnek, B.J. (1994). Canadian women's labor force behavior: A forty year review. *Canadian Home Economics Journal, 44,* 171-177.

Gibbons, P. (1999). *Spirituality at work: Definitions, measures, assumptions and validation.* Retrieved (April 27, 2001) from http://spiritatwork.com/uversity/Gibbons1999.htm.

Groen, J. (2003). How leaders cultivate spirituality in the workplace: What the research shows. *Adult Learning, 12,* 20-21.

Guillory, W. (2000). *The living organization: Spirituality in the workplace. A guide for adapting to the chaotically changing workplace.* Salt Lake City, Utah: Innovations International.

Harrington, W.J., Preziosi, R.C., & Gooden, D.J. (2001). Perceptions of workplace spirituality among professionals and executives. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal, 13,* 155-163.

Human Resources Development Canada. (1997). Changing realities, enduring needs. In *Collective reflection: Report of the advisory committee on the changing workplace* (15pp). Ottawa: Author.

Izzo, J., & Klein, E. (1998). *Awakening the corporate soul: Four paths to unleash the power of people at work.* Canada: Fairwinds Press.

Jacobson, S. (1994). *Spirituality and transformational leadership in secular setting: A Delphi study.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Seattle University. Seattle.

Kinjerski, V. (2004a). Four paths to spirit at work: How one develops spirit at work. *Exploring spirit at work: The interconnectedness of personality, personal actions, organizational features and the paths to spirit at work.* Unpublished paper in Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton.

Kinjerski, V. (2004b). The integrated self: A personality profile of individuals with high spirit at work. *Exploring spirit at work: The interconnectedness of personality, personal actions, organizational features and the paths to spirit at work.* Unpublished paper in Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton.

Kinjerski, V.M., & Skrypnek, B.J. (2003). Measuring spirit at work: Work in Progress. In G. Biberman and A. Alkhafaji (Eds.) *Business research yearbook: Global business perspectives,* Vol. X, 1015-1019.

Kinjerski, V.M., & Skrypnek, B.J. (2004). Defining spirit at work: Finding common ground. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 17,* 26-42.

Kohn, M.L., & Schooler, C. (1982). Job conditions and personality: A longitudinal assessment of their reciprocal effects. *American Journal of Sociology, 87,* 1257-1286.

Korac-Kakabadse, N., Kouzmin, A., & Kakabadse, A. (2002). Spirituality and leadership praxis. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 17,* 165-182.

Krishnakumar, S., & Neck, C.P. (2002). The "what" "why" and "how" of spirituality in the workplace. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 17,* 153-164.

Leiber, R.B. (1998, January 12). 100 best companies to work for in America: Why employees love these companies. *Fortune,* 72-74.

Leigh, P. (1997). The new spirit at work. *Training & Development, 51*(3), 26-41.

Milliman, J., Ferguson, J., Trickett, D., & Condemi, B. (1999). Spirit and community at Southwest Airlines: An investigation of a spiritual values-based model. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 12*, 221- 233.

Mitroff, I., & Denton, E. (1999). A study of spirituality in the workplace. *Sloan Management Review, 40*(4), 83-92.

Moxley, R. (2000). *Leadership and spirit: Breathing new vitality and energy into individuals and organizations.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Neck, C., & Milliman, J. (1994). Thought self-leadership: Finding spiritual fulfillment in organizational life. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 9*(6), 9-16.

Paulison, G.L. (2001). *Leadership and spirituality: Relationship of spirituality factors to personality preferences of management.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Phoenix, Arizona.

Reker, G.T., & Wong, P.T.P. (1988). Aging as an individual process: Toward a theory of personal meaning. In J.E. Birren & V.L. Bengston (Eds.), *Emergent theories of aging* (pp. 214-246). New York: Springer.

Secretan, L. (1997). *Reclaiming higher ground: Creating organizations that inspire the soul.* Toronto, Ontario: Macmillan.

Skrypnek, B. J., & Fast, J.E. (1996). Work and family policy in Canada: Family needs, collective solutions. *Journal of Family Issues, 17,* 793-812.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1994). Grounded theory methodology: An overview. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 273-285). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Tausky, C. (1996). Looking back: The industrial revolution. In *Work and society: An introduction to industrial sociology* (pp. 23-43). Itasca, Illinois: Peacock.

General Discussion and Conclusion

An Ecological Model of Spirit at Work

A change in the nature and meaning of work requires a new employee contract. An interest in spirit at work has come at a time when the work environment is shifting and uncertain rather than predictable and stable. This changing nature of work, including patterns of downsizing, restructuring, reduced employer commitment, and increased work-life conflict, is thought to have resulted in a spiritual crisis for many employees. Steiner (1995), a human ecologist, suggests that individuals are experiencing an ecological crisis, in part, from living fragmented lives. Spirit at work is seen as one antidote to such fragmentation and spiritual disorientation.

Based primarily on this dissertation research as well as drawing on my past research on spirit at work, the literature, and my knowledge of spirit at work, I have developed an ecological model of spirit at work. The model is based on the assumption that life is not separate from the environment in which it occurs. Thus, individual wellbeing and spirit at work are not separate from one's work or work environment. Grounded in data, an ecological model of spirit at work is provided in Figure 5-1. Suggestions of many possibilities for interaction, thus many paths to spirit at work, are indicated by the arrows. The underlying principle of this model is about the interconnectedness of factors that encourage spirit at work:

> The interconnection among particular personality characteristics, positive organizational conditions, and personal actions contributes to the creation and enhancement of spirit at work which leads to positive outcomes for employees, consumers, and organizations.

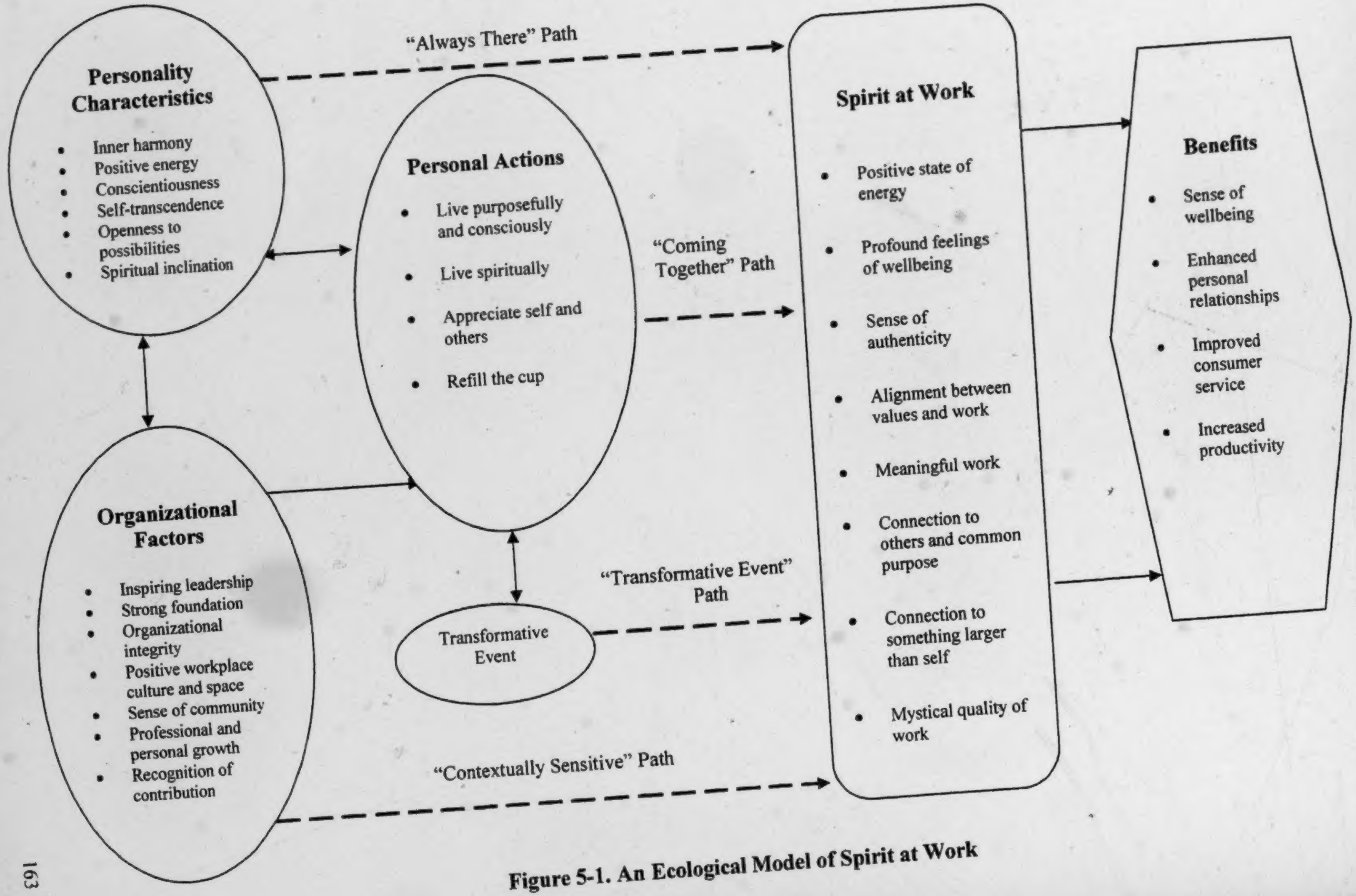
"Always There" Path
Personality Characteristics
Inner harmony
Positive energy
Conscientiousness
Self-transcendence
Openness to possibilities
Spiritual inclination
Personal Actions
Live purposefully and consciously
Live spiritually
Appreciate self and others
Refill the cup
"Coming Together" Path
Organizational Factors
Inspiring leadership
Strong foundation
Organizational integrity
Positive workplace culture and space
Sense of community
Professional and personal growth
Recognition of contribution
Transformative Event
"Transformative Event" Path
"Contextually Sensitive" Path
Spirit at Work
Positive state of energy
Profound feelings of wellbeing
Sense of authenticity
Alignment between values and work
Meaningful work
Connection to others and common purpose
Connection to something larger than self
Mystical quality of work
Benefits
Sense of wellbeing
Enhanced personal relationships
Improved consumer service
Increased productivity

Figure 5-1. An Ecological Model of Spirit at Work

The Emergence of an Ecological Model of Spirit at Work

Whereas it was necessary to break the data into parts for the purpose of analysis, the experience and stories of those with high spirit at work indicate that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Systems theory suggests that individuals are more than a collection of their personality, behaviour, and environment (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). Moreover, although one's personality, personal actions, and the features of the organization seem to differentially influence the experience of or path to spirit at work, for all persons, these facets interact and have a reciprocal influence, suggesting an ecological theory.

A human ecology perspective is unique in that it takes into account human beings both as biological organisms and social beings in interaction with their environment (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). As an applied discipline, human ecology is interested in enhancing human development, optimizing human functioning and potential, and improving quality of life (Westney, Brabble, & Edwards, 1988), making it a useful framework for understanding the creation and nurturance of spirit at work and its accompanying benefits.

Human ecology is concerned with four major concepts: human beings, their environments, the interaction between humans and their environment, and the resulting outcomes (Westney et al., 1988; Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). It is the combination and interaction, thus the interconnection, among each of the concepts that bring together the ecological spirit at work framework. An ecological approach suggests that spirit at work is not determined solely by personality, individual actions, or working environment, but as the interaction of the environment and the person, including their personality and behaviour. This interrelationship among personality, individual behaviours, and the organizational context is considered central to the creation of spirit at work and is the essence of the spirit at work model.

Uniqueness of the Ecological Spirit at Work Model

The uniqueness of the spirit at work model lies in its focus on viewing individuals, including their personality and personal behaviours, and their work environment as integrated wholes, mutually influencing each other. Visvader (1986) proposes that the greatest lesson of the twentieth century is interconnectedness. That everyone and everything is interconnected and interdependent is the essence of the spirit at work model. Emphasizing wellbeing, optimal functioning, and personal and organizational strengths, the effect of spirit at work is positive outcomes for the individual and the organization. Similar to human ecology, spirit at work is interdisciplinary, cutting across and incorporating the fields of psychology, sociology, theology, and business. Finally, the model is practical in that it is grounded in real experiences of persons with high spirit at work.

Key Concepts of the Model

The concepts of the ecological model of spirit at work are consistent with human ecology theory. The following includes a discussion about the underlying assumptions, the key elements and associated propositions, confidence of the theory, the advantages and limitations of the model, and the trustworthiness of the study.

Underlying Assumptions

Every model has a set of underlying assumptions. The spirit at work framework rests upon five assumptions about co-creation, intentionality, interaction, interconnection and interdependence, and context. Similar to human ecology theory, these assumptions overlap and are interdependent. Each assumption is presented below.

1. Co-creation: Individuals are co-creators of their existence, thus exercise some control over their lives and environment. In particular, employees shape their lives and work experience, thus influencing their experience of spirit at work, by making choices, taking actions, and engaging in relationships. Although employees are seen to have an element of control over their lives and experiences, the model recognizes that they are also influenced by their environment, thus, the notion of co-creation.
2. Intentionality: The assumption of intentionality is present at several levels of the model. Linked to the idea of co-creation is the element of intentionality and choice; all behaviour is intentional. Grounded in core values of wellbeing and enhanced quality of life, an assumption of the model is that spirit at work has positive benefits for the person experiencing it and others. At the personal and organizational levels, conscious intention, that is, a higher consciousness and intentionality, directs behaviour.
3. Interaction: Social and physical environments interact and influence human behaviour, human development, and spirit at work. At the same time, the individual interacts with and influences their physical and social environments, including their work environment. Thus, personality, personal actions, and organizational characteristics are seen to interact to influence the experience of spirit at work and ultimately, its outcomes.

4. Interconnection and Interdependence: Life and environment, including one's work environment, are inseparable and interdependent parts of a greater whole. As an ecosystem, the work environment is comprised of mutually sustaining transactions that link employees and their environment, making the employee's quality of life and the quality of the work environment interdependent. Everything in an ecosystem is interconnected; therefore, any alteration in flow of energy at one level requires adaptive change in the other. Whereas individual behaviours, personality, and organizational characteristics separately influence spirit at work, it is their interconnectedness that is seen to have the greatest influence on the creation of spirit at work.
5. Context: A person's situation and environment has a significant influence on his or her potential to experience spirit at work. Work environments can be negative and contribute to employee stress or positive and promote wellbeing among its members. The latter environment is seen to set the stage for and contribute to the enhancement of spirit at work. Thus, organizational features can be designed or modified to create and nurture spirit at work.

Elements of the Model

Several elements comprise the ecological model of spirit at work. Included are: a conceptualization of spirit at work, personality characteristics, personal actions, and organizational factors. The arrows and the paths illustrate the interaction and interconnectedness among these elements. Finally, the benefits reflect the desired outputs of the model. Each of these components, their relationships, and associated propositions will be described.

Conceptualization of spirit at work. Spirit at work is viewed as an individual experience as opposed to an organizational concept. Adapting Kinjerski and Skrypnek's (2004a) definition which is grounded in research, spirit at work is seen as a distinct experience characterized by positive affect, cognitive features, interpersonal dimensions, spiritual presence, and mystical components. More specifically, spirit at work includes profound feelings of well-being and joy, positive energy, and a sense of connection to others and common purpose. Persons with high spirit at work are authentic, believe that they are engaged in meaningful work that has a higher purpose, and have alignment between their values and beliefs and work. They feel a sense of connection to something larger than self such as a higher power, the Universe, nature or humanity. Finally, persons with high spirit at work have work experiences that are portrayed by a sense of perfection, transcendence, living in the moment, and that are sometimes awe-inspiring, sacred, or mysterious. Support for this definition was found in the experience of the participants in this study, thus enhancing the dependability and transferability of the concept of spirit at work.

Integrated personality. Given the emergence of a personality profile for persons with high spirit at work, I put forth that personality is important in the creation of spirit at work. Persons who are well adjusted and exhibit a sense of inner harmony, positive energy, conscientiousness, self-transcendence, openness to possibilities, and a spiritual inclination, have a tendency towards spirit at work. I call this the "integrated self" personality profile because the essence of the spirit at work personality seems to be the integration of all the personality dimensions. The spiritual inclination dimension, and specifically, the conscious intention of persons with high spirit at work seems to be the key personality dimension responsible for fostering spirit at work.

Proposition 1: *The experience of high spirit at work is linked to the presence of a well adjusted, integrated personality with a spiritual inclination.*

The research findings suggest that spirituality is the personality dimension that makes people's experience of spirit at work unique, suggesting that the inclination towards spirituality is what fosters individual transformation and spirit at work. I contend that individuals with a spirit at work personality profile exemplify spiritual intelligence. A strong connection with something larger than self, that quest for meaning, the sense of purpose beyond self, and self-transcendent nature of those with a disposition towards spirit at work seem to make the difference.

The spiritual inclination facet is about the capacity for change in personality and personal transformation. However, most personality theorists contend that personality traits develop through childhood and reach maturity in adulthood, around age 30, remaining relatively stable thereafter (McCrae & Costa, 1999). Yet, emotional intelligence is reported to peak around age 50 before levelling off (Steiner, 2000) and spirituality is believed to change and develop over the entire life span (Emmons, 2000; Piedmont, 2001). I believe that the "spiritual inclination" dimension can be influenced through cognitive and behavioural change, thereby fostering spirit at work at any age. The spiritual inclination facet can be developed by engaging in an ongoing process of discernment and reflection, questing for meaning and purpose, seeking purposiveness beyond self, adopting a sense of gratitude and humility, and living with a higher consciousness.

Personal actions. Consistent with dominant views on personality (McCrae & Costa, 1999), it seems reasonable that personality interacts with personal actions to foster spirit at work. Supporting the constructivist view that we are co-creators of our life experience, personal behaviours include taking responsibility and action for creating the kind of life which is desired, including one's work experience. Consciously living a life that is purposeful and meaningful and working at cultivating and living a spiritual, value-based life are personal actions that foster spirit at work. Recognition of one's own worth and the value of others as well as expression of appreciation for self and others is another personal action that leads to spirit at work. Finally, taking time to refill one's cup by pursuing that which is intrinsically rewarding and by engaging in self-care and rejuvenation in ways that are personally meaningful, contribute to the nurturance of spirit at work. Not only do these personal actions appear to be in alignment with the "spiritual inclination" dimension of the integrated personality profile, they are consistent with the notion of conscious intention.

Proposition 2: *One's conscious intention sets spirit at work into motion.*

Being mindful about how one lives one's life and choosing to live with purpose and meaning is the essence of conscious intention. Conscious intention can be developed through a process of self-awareness, living with intention, seeking integration of self, making positive choices, and engaging in transformative action that matters. For example, seeking clarity about one's life purpose and the intention and direction of one's work raises one's consciousness about what is important. Being mindful and intentional about achieving one's purpose and goals and making conscious choices that direct one's life, including work, toward contributing to the common good, helps to fulfill that sense of service to others, which is fundamental to the experience of spirit at work.

Conscious intention is a critical factor because it reflects one's thoughts, values, feelings, actions, and how one chooses to live life. Every action is a reflection of intention. Individuals can change their consciousness, thus their conscious thought. If I choose to express compassion instead of frustration or anger with my clients, I have changed my conscious thought. Consistent with a constructivist view, changing one's thoughts, changes one's experience. If I find meaning in the work I am doing, my work will become more meaningful. Moreover, I can create my reality with my intentions. By choosing to "serve" others, I create a reality of contributing to society.

Conscious intention is closely linked to personality in that it encourages spiritual development which is the key facet of an integrated personality. I suggest that individuals who engage in conscious intention will support the development of their spiritual growth, thus fostering their spirit at work.

Organizational factors. In addition to personal responsibility, the ecological framework points to the importance of context, especially one's work environment, in fostering spirit at work. Several organizational characteristics were identified as important to the enhancement of spirit at work: inspired leadership; a strong organizational foundation; organizational integrity; positive workplace culture and space; a sense of community; opportunities for professional and personal growth; and appreciation and regard for each member and their contribution. These organizational factors are seen to interact with personality characteristics and personal actions to foster spirit at work.

Proposition 3: *Organizational features, and leadership in particular, contribute to the creation and enhancement of spirit at work through creating an organizational climate that promotes personality characteristics and personal actions which foster spirit at work.*

Although organizational characteristics are seen to be very important to the development of spirit at work, I suggest that their primary value is in facilitating personal actions that foster spirit at work. Whereas the findings pointed to organizational facets that impeded and others that enhanced spirit at work, I am reminded that even the participants who took the contextually sensitive path to spirit at work and, for a time, lost their spirit at work, relied on their personality and personal actions to recreate that experience of spirit at work. Retaining the idea that spirit at work begins with the individual, the importance of the organizational features is to foster the integrated personality, and in particular, employees' spiritual development. Although organizational characteristics cannot create spirit at work without the employee taking some personal action, I believe, and the research showed, that one's spirit at work can be negatively affected by the features of the work environment.

Although a hierarchy of organizational qualities that fostered spirit at work did not emerge, most factors seemed to stem from the leadership within the organization. Maintaining organizational integrity, it was the leader who set the tone for the organization and inspired the employees by the example he or she set. The leader cultivated a shared vision, mission, values, purpose, and goals and promoted alignment among them and the organization's work. Thus, it seems reasonable to speculate that leadership is the key organizational factor that influences all other organizational factors that foster spirit at work.

The paths to spirit at work. The paths to spirit at work reflect the view that spirit at work is a journey and that personality traits, personal actions, and organizational features interact to foster its development. However, the placement of the four distinct paths to spirit at work – *always there, coming together, transformative event, and contextually sensitive* – suggests that perhaps these factors weigh differently for persons on the various paths.

The "always there path" indicates that spirit at work is always present and is sustained over time. The "coming together path" is described as a culmination of life experience, skills, and passions whereby individuals lived in alignment. On the "contextually sensitive path," the experience of spirit at work is influenced by work experiences or organizational factors and thus waxes and wanes. Finally, the path of "transformative events" occurs through a transformative response to an acute event, either a spiritual crisis or spiritual awakening.

Proposition 4: *There is no single path to spirit at work.*
Proposition 5: *Each path is uniquely influenced by a greater or lesser degree of personality traits, personal actions, and organizational factors.*

There is not one path to spirit at work. Nor do individuals necessarily stay on the same path. Depending on life circumstances and context individuals may switch paths, thus speeding up or slowing down the process to spirit at work. However, identification of the paths is useful in that they indicate the many ways to spirit at work. Moreover, they suggest that certain factors may have a greater influence on some paths than others.

For example, the "always there" path suggests that the creation of spirit at work, for some individuals, may be more heavily influenced by personality traits. It could be argued that persons on the "always there" path may have experienced a transformative event very early in life such that they appear to have always experienced spirit at work, but really, they are the same as those on the "transformative events" path. However, the individuals on this path present qualitatively different than persons on the other paths. Persons on the "always there" path seem to enjoy a constant experience of spirit at work, in spite of performing work that appears meaningless or working under negative working conditions.

Unlike the "always there" path, the "transformative events" path suggests that anyone, of any personality type, can experience a personal transformation that leads to spirit at work. What seems to be critical to the transformative path is the personal response to the transformative event. For example, a personal action that leads to and integrates a spiritual awakening likely also fosters spirit at work.

This personal responsibility to foster spirit at work also seems to be fundamental to the "coming together" and "contextually sensitive" paths. Persons on these paths see spirit at work as a journey and something that they constantly work at. Although they also share a spirit at work personality profile, it seems that it is more their personal actions than their personality that contributes to their spirit at work and enables them to respond positively to organizational characteristics that foster spirit at work.

Whereas organizational factors set the context for all paths, it is evident that persons on the "contextually sensitive" path are more dependent on the conditions of the organization than others. Although the findings suggest that individuals on the "contextually sensitive" path are not as high on the spiritual inclination dimension as others in the study and therefore, perhaps more readily influenced by organizational factors, the sample size is too small to confirm this contention.

Benefits of spirit at work. Participants in this study have indicated that the benefits of spirit at work are many; spirit at work has a positive effect on personal wellbeing, relationships, consumer relations, and productivity. In particular, the results of high levels of spirit at work include: (a) individual wellbeing that overflows to other parts of life; (b) a positive effect on relationships, including a sense of community with those whom one works; (c) increased productivity in terms of the quality and quantity of work produced; as well as (d) improved consumer service. Thus, the desired benefits of the ecological model of spirit at work are positive outcomes for the individual and the organization, including the consumer.

Confidence in the Spirit at Work Theory

The theory of spirit at work posits that although the elements of personality, personal actions, and organizational characteristics are interconnected, one could propose a process or priority sequence to these elements. The organizational characteristics, and the leadership of the organization in particular, set the context for spirit at work to develop, but I contend that spirit at work begins with the individual. Those individuals with well adjusted personality profiles including a spiritual inclination and who live with conscious intention are more likely to experience spirit at work. That may be why these people appear to transcend a negative work environment.

Parts of this theory are proposed with confidence, parts still remain speculative. Although the conceptualization of spirit at work may change slightly as the concept is more fully understood, it is consistent with previous research and how it is described in the spirit at work literature. The personality profile is also provided with confidence. Not only is there consistency in the participants' personality, the profile is compatible with the Big Five Factor Model of Personality (McCrae & Costa, 1999), which has been reproduced and validated extensively, and the "spirituality dimension" that is emerging in the literature (Piedmont, 1999, 2001). Whereas the idea that personal actions influence one's experience of spirit at work is strong and supported in the spirituality and spirit at work literature, the identification of the personal actions may be incomplete. For example the notion of an "active coping style" of persons with high spirit at work which was hinted at in previous research that I completed to develop a measure of spirit at work (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004c), did not surface in this study. Moreover, it is still uncertain whether some actions are more important than others in fostering spirit at work. Similarly, whereas the organizational characteristics are consistent with organizational literature, it is still unclear which features are more strongly linked to the development of spirit at work. However, the idea of leadership being at the hub of all these characteristics and the creation of spirit at work is receiving support in the spirit at work literature (Fairholm, 1996; Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, & Kakabadse, 2002). The proposition about the paths is still very speculative although the notion of different ways to spirit at work, such as the transformative path (Neal, Lichenstein, & Banner, 1999) is beginning to emerge. However, it is uncertain if the paths are indeed distinct or if there are more or fewer than four paths. Finally, the benefits of spirit at work are provided with confidence as they are consistent with what other researchers say about spirit at work and research findings (Groen, 2003; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002; Milliman, Ferguson, Trickett, & Condemi, 1999; Mitroff & Denton, 1999).

The ecological model of spirit at work is seen to have several advantages over models that might consider the individual and work environment as separate.

Fundamental to the model is the view that individuals interact with and thus, are influenced by and influence their work environment. When the work experience is considered as a whole, fragmentation of self is avoided. This broad scope of the model enables interventions to focus on the individual, groups of individuals, or whole organizations. Moreover, interventions can occur within or outside of the work environment, but still have impact at the individual and organizational level. Because it was developed from data from participants of differing ages, gender, education, type of employment, and socio-economic status, the model is not limited to any particular type of person or organization. Another advantage of an ecological framework of spirit at work is its applicability to research or practice. At a research level, the model can be used to test the propositions that emerged from this research. At a practice level, the model is well suited for analysis and problem solving at the individual and organizational level.

The ecological spirit at work framework is compatible with several questions, for example, how can spirit at work be increased? How can work environments that foster spirit at work be created, managed, and enhanced? How can personal actions be fostered to impact spirit at work? How do particular actions or features impact upon the employee, customer, or organization? Finally, application of the ecological framework is seen as useful for enhancing quality of life and wellbeing for the employee and the consumer as well as increasing productivity at the organizational level.

Trustworthiness of Research

All research is judged on the basis of how sound it is. Lincoln and Guba (1985) call this the "truth value" and offer a set of questions to which all social science research should respond. First, how believable are the findings of this particular study? Second, how applicable are the findings to other people or settings? Next, how reasonably sure are we that the findings could be replicated with the same people and context? Last, are the findings reflective of the participants and the inquiry itself? This grounded theory study has been designed with soundness criteria in mind.

As my intent was to develop a theory about how individuals come to experience spirit at work, I used a grounded theory approach as described by Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Charmaz (2000). Grounded theory is a qualitative methodology which derives its name from the practice of generating theory from research which is "grounded" in data based on real life experiences (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). I chose grounded theory because, as a method, it goes beyond description and even the generation of theory to grounding that theory in data that are systematically gathered, analyzed, and interpreted through the research process, thus increasing the study's credibility. The research process included member checking and agreement with a senior researcher about the coding frame and the fit of the categories, further enhancing confirmability. Strauss and Corbin (1998) argue that theory derived from data are more likely to resemble reality than theory that is derived from concepts based on experience or through speculation because it is based on the standpoint of those who live it, again, enhancing the credibility of the theory. Moreover, because grounded theories are drawn from data, they are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide meaningful guidance at a theoretical and practical level.

The theory is considered sound because it is grounded in the experience of those who have high spirit at work. These experiences were similar to the experiences of a group of "experts" who I studied in a previous study to define spirit at work, thus increase the transferability of the findings. Moreover, the findings are also consistent with the organizational literature on spirit at work and the personality literature, particularly the notion of spirituality emerging as a sixth personality dimension. Finally, the notion of an ecological model is supported by human ecology theory and previous research on spirit at work. A more detailed discussion of the trustworthiness of my research can be found in Appendix A.

Implications for Theory and Practice

The revelation about how one comes to experience spirit at work has implications for theory and practice. Moreover, the finding that spirit at work has benefits for the employee, consumer, and organization supports it as a topic worthy of research. Grounded in data, these findings may: add to the perspectives about how one comes to experience spirit at work; contribute to the understanding of personality traits of individuals with high spirit at work and challenge the notion of spirituality as separate from personality; add to the understanding of the multiple ways spirit at work can develop and be enhanced; lend support to the notion of incorporating spirituality into work; support the view of work and life as integrated spheres; suggest different methods for organizations and individuals to foster spirit at work; give credibility to a holistic approach to interventions rather than a piecemeal one; and lend support for the view that spirit at work is beneficial at several levels.

The interconnectedness of the paths individuals take, the identification of the integrated personality profile, and the revealing of personal actions and organizational characteristics that foster spirit at work have implications for individuals and organizations wanting to enhance individual spirit at work. Identification of the distinct paths suggests unique interventions for different people at varying stages of life and points to the usefulness of transformative events as opportunities for fostering spirit at work. The revelation that creating spirit at work is a shared responsibility among employees and the organization implies that efforts should be directed at both the individual and workplace. This discovery opens the doors for personal exploration and development as well as program development and implementation at the organizational level. For example, strategies designed to enhance individual spirit at work can target the employee, the organization, or both. They can be limited to individual personal growth and transformation or as comprehensive as organizational transformation. Individual spirit at work can be fostered through a multitude of strategies, programs, policies, and training initiatives at the organizational level.

Whereas the organization can direct interventions toward the employee and the organization, the individual can engage in personal exploration and development, particularly that of living consciously and intentionally, in and outside the work environment. Moreover, because one's spiritual growth is viewed as an important contributor to spirit at work and is seen to develop over the life span, it follows that the development of one's spirituality could be fostered during anytime over the life span. Whereas these interventions can occur at an individual or an organizational level, the ecological model suggests that the strength comes when they are considered in context and treated as a whole.

Looking Forward: Suggestions for Future Research

I have proposed an ecological model of spirit at work and introduced several propositions about the development of spirit at work. Although they are consistent with existing research on spirit at work and personality, they are based on the experience of a small sample. Moreover, although the components of the model are grounded in data and supported by the spirit at work literature, the relationships among these elements remain to be tested further. To be able to fully explore and examine all of the parts of this model would take a program of research, however I suggest that the first step is to examine the relationships suggested by the ecological model of spirit at work.

The merit of a spirit at work model is its potential to demonstrate benefit, at a minimum, to persons experiencing spirit at work, but hopefully to others as well, including the work organization. Even though the spirit at work literature talks about the advantages of spirit at work (Groen, 2003; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002; Milliman, Ferguson, Trickett, & Condemi, 1999; Mitroff & Denton, 1999) and this study provided further support, there is little empirical evidence to support the claims. The relationship between spirit at work and potential benefits could be examined through a correlational study that asks the question: Is there a relationship between spirit at work and the perceived benefits of personal wellbeing, enhanced personal relationships, and increased productivity? One hypothesis that falls out of this question is: Individuals with higher levels of spirit at work, as measured by the Spirit at Work Scale (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004b), will experience higher levels of personal wellbeing, as measured by the Rosenberg Self Esteem Inventory (Rosenberg, 1986) and the Perceived Stress Inventory (Cohen, Kamarack, & Mermelstein, 1983). Similar studies could be designed to determine the relationship between spirit at work and improved personal relationships, enhanced consumer service, and increased productivity.

Examination into the relationship between personality and spirit at work as suggested by this model would provide some insight into the nature of that relationship. For example, it may demonstrate that persons with high spirit at work have greater degrees of one personality dimension than other personality dimensions. Given my research findings and how others speak about spirit at work in the literature, I would expect individuals with high spirit at work to score higher on the spiritual inclination dimension, as measured by the Human Spirituality Scale (Wheat, 1991), than persons who experience lower levels of spirit at work. Yet, the notion of an integrated personality, which emerged in my research, suggests that for spirit at work to occur, perhaps all of these personality dimensions are necessary. A study that explores the relationship between spirit at work, personality traits, and spirituality may show that spirit at work is about the synergy that comes from the combination of all the personality dimensions. Measures such as the Spirit at Work Scale (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004b), the Big Five Inventory (John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991), and the Human Spirituality Scale (Wheat, 1991) or the Spiritual Transcendence Scale (Piedmont, 1999) could support such a study.

The relationship between organizational factors and spirit at work should be determined prior to encouraging and investing in the promotion of such organizational features. A study that compares the levels of spirit at work in an organization that is considered to exemplify the organizational features that emerged in this study, with a similar organization which is seen to exhibit fewer of these organizational features, may illustrate the relationship between organizational factors and spirit at work. I expect that the mean levels of spirit at work of employees in an organization with fostering organizational features will be higher that the mean levels of spirit at work in those without them. If this assumption is supported, future research can also examine the relationship among each individual organizational feature and spirit at work. In doing so, a few, like leadership, for example, may emerge clearly as the decisive factors.

Once these basic aspects of the spirit at work model have been supported by correlational studies, future research can explore the interaction and interconnectedness of the elements. A longitudinal study that follows changes in work environments, personality, personal actions, and spirit at work over time would reveal how these factors interact and how they interact for persons following the different paths to spirit at work.

Personal Reflections

I feel very grateful to have had the opportunity to spend four years studying a topic that has such personal meaning. My experiences during this PhD have helped me to grow personally, professionally, and spiritually. Personally, I have explored a topic of personal importance and have further come to understand the significance of work to my wellbeing. Professionally, I have developed a level of research skill and academic writing competence which were two of my goals upon returning to University. Spiritually, I am becoming more attuned to that which matters, am becoming more aware of and grateful for my many blessings, and am fostering a life that is integrated and in alignment with my values. While the learning has been great, two particular gifts stand out. The first gift is the knowing that my pre-teen son has adopted an attitude that work is meaningful and fun, can identify spirit at work in others, and is committed having spirit at work himself. The second gift is the affirmation of a concept such as spirit at work and confirmation that it can indeed be fostered. Work is such an important part of my life as well as an avenue through which I make some of my greatest contributions, so it is rewarding to know that my research has contributed to our understanding of how it develops, and more so, how it is fostered.

There is no exact blueprint to develop spirit at work. No individual is the same, nor is each context or organization identical. However, my research uncovered several factors that enhanced spirit at work for individuals that cut across age, gender, education, profession, socio-economic group, and type of organization. It is up to each individual and organization to decide upon the factors that best fit their situation.

References

Berg, B.L. (2001). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences (4th ed.).* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

Bubolz, M., & Sontag, M. (1993). Human ecology theory. In P. Boss, W. Doherty, R. LaRossa, W. Schumm & S. Steinmetz (Eds.), *Sourcebook of family theories and methods: A contextual approach* (pp. 419- 448). New York: Plenum.

Charmaz, K. (2000). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 509-535). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cohen, S., Kamarack, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 24,* 385-396.

Corbin, J. M. (1986). Qualitative data analyses for grounded theory. In W.C. Chenitz & J.M. Swanson (Eds.), *From practice to grounded theory: Qualitative research in nursing.* Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley.

Emmons, R.A. (2000). Is spirituality an intelligence? Motivation, cognition, and the psychology of ultimate concern. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 10,* 3-26.

Fairholm, G.W. (1996). Spiritual leadership: Fulfilling whole-self needs at work. *Leadership & Organizational Development Journal, 17*(5), 11-17.

Gall, M.D., Borg, W.R., & Gall, J.P. (1996). *Educational research: An introduction* (6th ed.). New York: Longman.

Gergen, M. M., & Gergen, K.J. (2000). Qualitative inquiry: Tensions and transformations. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 1025-1065). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Groen, J. (2003). How leaders cultivate spirituality in the workplace: What the research shows. *Adult Learning, 12,* 20-21.

John, O. P., Donahue, E. M., & Kentle, R. L. (1991). *The big five inventory – Versions 4a and 54.* Berkeley, CA University of California, Berkeley, Institute of Personality and Social Research.

Kinjerski, V.M., & Skrypnek, B.J. (2004a). Defining spirit at work: Finding common ground. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 17,* 26-42.

Kinjerski, V., & Skrypnek, B.J. (2004b). *Spirit at work scale: Scoring and interpretation manual.* Unpublished manual.

Kinjerski, V., & Skrypnek, B.J. (2004c). [Active coping style of persons with spirit at work]. Unpublished raw data.

Kirby, S., & McKenna, K. (1989). *Experience, research, social change: Methods from the margins*. Toronto: Garomond Press.

Korac-Kakabadse, N., Kouzmin, A., & Kakabadse, A. (2002). Spirituality and leadership praxis. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 17,* 165-182.

Krishnakumar, S., & Neck, C.P. (2002). The "what" "why" and "how" of spirituality in the workplace. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 17*(3), 153-64.

Leininger, M. (1994). Evaluation criteria and critique of qualitative research studies. In J.M. Morse (Ed.), *Critical issues in qualitative research methods* (pp. 95-115). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (1999). *Designing qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McCrae, R.R., & Costa, P.T., Jr. (1999). A five-factor theory of personality. In L.A. Pervin & O.P. John (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (2nd ed., pp. 139-153). New York: Guilford.

Milliman, J., Ferguson, J., Trickett, D., & Condemi, B. (1999). Spirit and community at Southwest Airlines: An investigation of a spiritual values-based model. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 12,* 221- 233.

Mitroff, I., & Denton, E. (1999). A study of spirituality in the workplace. *Sloan Management Review, 40*(4), 83-92.

Morse, J.M. (1994). Emerging from the data: The cognitive process of analysis in qualitative inquiry. In J.M. Morse (Ed.), *Critical issues in qualitative research methods* (pp. 281-297). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Neal, J.A., Lichenstein, B.M.B. & Banner, D. (1999). Spiritual perspectives on individual, organizational and societal transformation. *Journal of Organizational Change management, 12,* 175-185.

Owens, R.G. (1982). Methodological rigor in naturalistic inquiry: Some issues and answers. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 18,* 1-21.

Piedmont, R.L., (1999). Does spirituality represent the sixth factor of personality? Spiritual transcendence and the five factor model. *Journal of Personality, 67,* 985-1013.

Piedmont, R.L. (2001). Spiritual transcendence and the scientific study of spirituality. *Journal of Rehabilitation, 67,* 4-14.

Rosenberg, M. (1986). *Conceiving the self.* Reprint, Melbourne, Florida: Krieger.

Steiner, D. (1985). A conceptual framework for a general human ecology. In S.Wright, (Ed.), *Human ecology: Progress through integrative perspectives* (pp. 35-52). Seventh Conference of SHE. Bar Harbor, Maine: The Society for Human Ecology.

Steiner, S.J. (2000). *The EQ edge: Emotional intelligence and your success.* Toronto: Stoddart.

Strauss, A.L., & Corbin, J.M. (1994). Grounded theory methodology: An overview. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 273-285). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Strauss, A.L., & Corbin, J.M. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Visvader, J. (1986). Philosophy and human ecology. In *Human ecology: A gathering of perspectives* (pp. 117-127). First International Conference of SHE, College Park, Maryland: Society for Human Ecology.

Westney, O., Brabble, E., & Edwards, C. (1988). Human ecology: Concepts and perspectives. In R. J. Borden & J. Jacobs (Eds.), *Human ecology: Research and applications* (pp. 129-137). College Park, MD: Society for Human Ecology.

Wheat, W.L. (1991). Development of a scale for the measurement of human spirituality. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Maryland. College Park.

Whitchurch, G.G., & Constantine, L.L. (1993). Systems theory. In P.G. Boss, W.J. Doherty, R. LaRossa, W.R. Schumm, & S.K. Steinmetz (Eds.), *Sourcebook of family theories and methods: A contextual approach* (pp. 325-352). New York: Plenum Press.

Appendix A
Trustworthiness Criteria

Trustworthiness refers to the soundness of qualitative research and is generally judged in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A discussion of each criterion in relation to my research follows.

Credibility refers to the ability of the researcher to demonstrate that the truth as known, experienced, or felt by the participants of the study, is established and interpreted accurately (Leininger, 1994). The strength of a qualitative study rests with its validity (Marshall & Rossman (1999) that is, how believable it is. Preliminary interpretations were shared with participants to confirm that I had captured their truth. Rich descriptions of participants, their context, and experience were provided within the boundaries of a grounded theory study. Whereas thick descriptions are important in demonstrating the participant's truth, grounded theory is concerned with conceptual density, that is, richness of concept development and relationships (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The provision of several quotes to support the concepts will enable readers to judge their density.

Transferability refers to the usefulness of applying the findings from one study to other similar settings, situations, or contexts. Some argue that the judgment about relevance of findings from the original research to another setting lies more with the researcher who wishes to make the transfer than the original researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). However, in-depth descriptions of concepts and examples from the data should enable the reader to determine the applicability of the findings to another situation while preserving the meanings and interpretations of the original study.

Qualitative research has adopted the use of triangulation as way to strengthen the transferability of the study (Berg, 2001). Triangulation includes a variety of data, theories, researchers, and methods (Berg, 2001). The identification of and use of multiple frameworks and theoretical parameters required an examination of the data from different perspectives. Rather than aiming for a single voice, multiple voices (Gergen & Gergen, 2000) were sought by interviewing participants with wide-ranging perspectives, varying profiles, and differing work contexts. This variation gives a grounded theory analysis its conceptual richness (Strauss & Corbin, 1994) and also strengthens the study's transferability.

Dependability Qualitative researchers assert that qualitative research cannot be replicated due to the changing social world; therefore, consideration is given to how well another person could arrive at similar conclusions (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Dependability was strengthened in this study by keeping a research journal that recorded the research process including research decisions and rationale behind them, analytical memos, tapes and transcripts of interviews, and interview notes. Thus, a sufficient audit trail is available so that others could inspect my procedures, decisions and interpretations (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996) and reconstruct the process (Morse, 1994). This audit trail was regularly discussed with my supervisor. Moreover, all the transcripts were read by my supervisor, a seasoned researcher. She reviewed all stages of analysis, and I reworked themes until we achieved agreement and all coded data fit the categories.

Confirmability refers to the neutrality of the researcher and how reflective the findings are of the information provided by the participants. I did not presume to be objective or neutral. In fact, one of the strengths of qualitative research is the opportunity to develop an in-depth understanding of the participants to gain entry into their worlds (Marshall & Mossman, 1999). Nevertheless, to ensure that the research was reflective of all the participants, findings and interpretations were checked along the way, through the use of "member checking" (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Clarification was sought during the interviews through questioning, paraphrasing, and summarizing, as well as elaboration of responses. Emerging concepts were taken back to the participants for clarification, elaboration and verification as well as checked out with new participants in subsequent interviews, strengthening the confirmability of the study.

Reflexivity is the process of reflecting on the self as the researcher, the instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The process of practicing 'reflexivity' through journaling the research process and exploration of my conceptual baggage (Kirby & McKenna, 1989) along with memo writing upon completion of each interview and throughout the analysis phase assisted in the identification of any researcher bias. Finally, I made use of peer debriefing (Owens, 1982) with colleagues in the doctoral program. Appendix A includes a summary of these criteria.

Summary of Trustworthiness Criteria

Questions to Which Social Research Needs to Respond	Essence of the Question	Traditional Term	Alternative Term for Qualitative Inquiry	Techniques
How believable are the findings?	Truth value	Internal validity	Credibility	Dense descriptions Member checking
How applicable are the findings to other people or settings?	Applicability	External validity	Transferability	Triangulation with multiple participants, multiple theories, and review by second researcher Sufficiency in sampling
How reasonably sure are we that the findings could be replicated with the same people and context?	Consistency	Reliability	Dependability	Pilot study Research journal Audit trail Agreement of second researcher
Are the findings reflective of the participants and the inquiry?	Neutrality	Objectivity	Confirmability	Member checking Reflexivity Debriefing